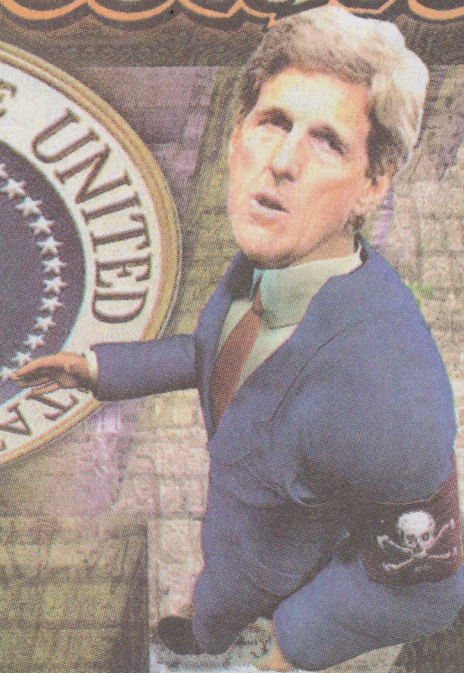
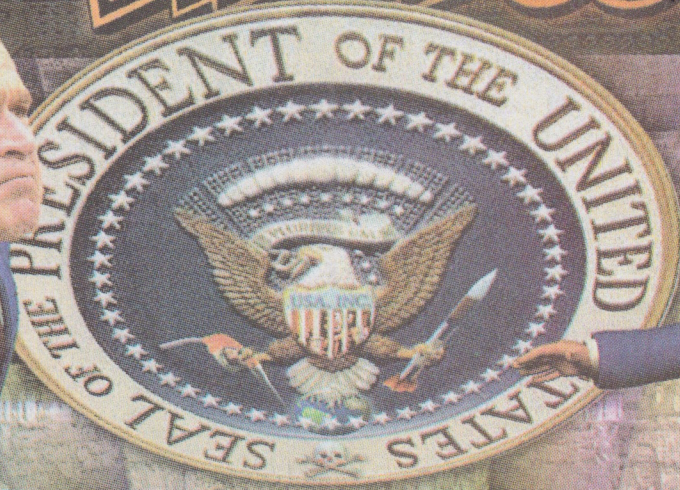




Fifth estate



THE POLITICS OF CONSPIRACY

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Spring 2004
Vol. 39 No. 1
(364)

Unwanted

**Unlimited Reward offered for the elimination
of power held by Republicans,
Democrats, & other politicians.**

**Known to be engaged in a vast conspiracy to
spread death & disease, poverty & rape—
a conspiracy to completely dominate
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**G8 Summit
Where: Sea Island, GA
When: June 8-10**

**Democrats
Where: Boston
When: July 26-29**

**Republicans
Where: New York
When: Aug. 29-Sept. 2**

This summer, politicians will gather to promote colonization, deforestation, privatization, globalization, alienation, and devastation. For too long, we have allowed the kings to name the terrain for confrontation. But this summer the resistance will be everywhere, reclaiming towns and fighting off the neoliberal capitalist invasion at every opportunity. This is a call for a summer of decentralized defiance & desire, building a future of freedom and joy. We shall craft our resistance in the loving image of the world we want. No more years of misery & war.

Fifth

Number 364

estate



Our ancestors had
better things to do.
They voted for
nothing—except
themselves.

SPRING 2004

Unanimity Day

by Evgeny Zamyatin

FE notes: *The following passage is from Evgeny Zamyatin's dystopian sci-fi satire We (1919). Zamyatin, a naval engineer who specialized in building ice-breakers, had been imprisoned and driven into exile twice by the tsarist regime for subversive activity. During World War I, he was an enthusiastic supporter of the revolutionary communist underground and was persecuted for antimilitarist activities.*

He became disaffected with the Bolsheviks soon after the Russian Revolution and he began to publish critiques of Lenin's increasing use of coercion to create totalitarian conformity. Soviet censors banned We after its publication in a Czechoslovakian journal in 1924. When Zamyatin was officially declared a non-person by the State, he wrote to Stalin in 1931 and demanded to be deported. He died in France six years late.

Let me tell you about the Day of Unanimity, about that Great Day. I have loved it since childhood. Tomorrow, I will see the same spectacle which we see year after year, and which always awakes in us excitingly fresh emotions, as if we saw it for the first time: the mighty chalice of accord, an impressive throng of arms raised in reverence.

Tomorrow is the day of the yearly election of the Great Benefactor. Tomorrow we shall hand over to our Great Benefactor the keys to the impreg-

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nable fortress of our happiness for the forty-eighth time. Certainly, this in no way resembles the disorderly, unorganized election days of the ancients, on which (it seems so funny!) they did not even know in advance the result of the election. To build a state on some non-discountable contingencies, to build blindly—what could be more nonsensical? Yet centuries had to pass before this was understood.

The elections themselves have a symbolic meaning. They remind us that we are a united, powerful organism of millions of cells. The history of the United State knows not a single case in which upon this solemn day even a solitary

news, reviews, etc.

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voice has dared to violate the magnificent unison.

We celebrate our election openly, honestly, in daylight. I see them all vote for the Great Benefactor, and everybody sees me vote for the Great Benefactor. How can it be otherwise, since "ALL" and "I" are one, big "WE"?

Even if someone were to imagine the impossible—that is, the outbreak of some dissonance in our customary united monophony—then our unseen Guardians are always right there among us, are they not? They can immediately identify those who might fall into error and save them from any further false steps and save the United State.

Welcome to another *Fifth Estate*! This marks our eighth issue since moving to Pumpkin Hollow. With an editorial office in the Barn and an editorial collective all over the continent, we are proud to approach our 40th anniversary with a thriving publication as opposed to authority as ever.

When we announced the theme as "Conspiracy and Elections," little did we realize how much the edition would emerge as one focused on politics and rhetoric. In particular, we examine the growing tension between the horrific hallucination known as democracy and the utopian vision known as anarchy.

As we go to press, activists all over the world are preparing for a Spring and Summer of intense actions. We hope this magazine will inspire courage and commitment for the struggle ahead.

Fifth estate

The *Fifth Estate* (FE) is an unincorporated, cooperative magazine published since 1965. As opposed to professionals who publish to secure wages or invest in the media information industry, our collective consists of volunteer writers, artists, and editors—friends who produce the paper as an expression of resistance to an unjust and destructive society.

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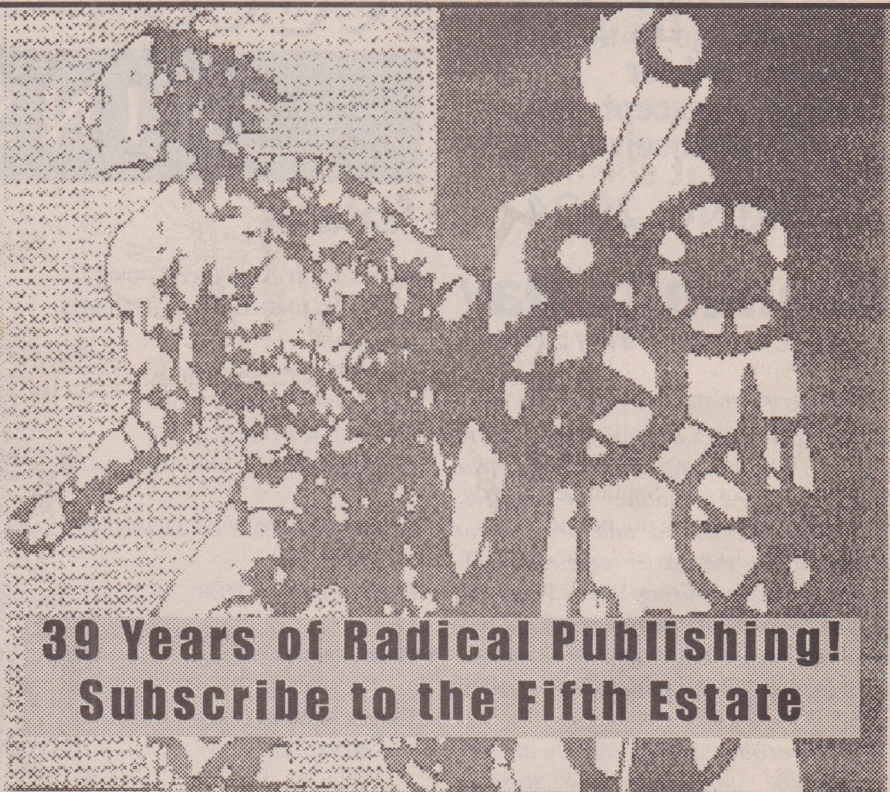
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Part of the Allied Press Syndicate
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Subscription Office
PO Box 201016, Ferndale, MI
48220

Southern Collective, Tennessee
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Defending our politics & defining our vision against bashing, baiting, & backlash

This is what slander looks like

The forces of capital have once again called upon their storm troopers and talking heads to physically and symbolically crush the growing, global anti-capitalist movement. In the United States, building from the tragic embarrassment of September 11 and overreacting to political defeats like Cancun and the Battle of Seattle, the State has intensified its sustained 150-year-old campaign to defile the public reputation of anarchists.

Last November, this reached frenzied levels in the days preceding the anti-FTAA protest as journalists, politicians, and Miami police engaged in what one writer called "an orgy of anarchist-bashing."

Last November in Miami represents tyranny's latest epiphany in using the word "anarchist" to demonize, criminalize, and marginalize an entire movement. By trying to divide the global justice movement into further factions of good protesters (such as union leaders and rock stars who believe in symbolic protest) and anarchists (anyone who does direct action, advocates anti-authoritarian ideals, dresses a certain way, or brandishes a certain device coded as dangerous), the propagandists of repression intend to stifle an impressive revolutionary milieu for the new century.

The disinformation inherent in the Miami-style strategy already has a track record for intimidating protesters and the public alike. In February 2002, anticipating protests against the World Economic Forum in New York City, a journalist for the liberal *Village Voice* joined the fear flurry.

Writer Richard Esposito described anarchists as "jet-setting troublemakers" intending "to infiltrate law-abiding activists, with the goal of damaging property, hindering access to the meetings, and garnering media attention for their anti-globalization agenda." In contrast to such chaotic cosmopolitans, the cops were depicted as a "disciplined, experienced, blue-collar division of uniformed police."

Esposito sums up his dramatic view of the stark contrast between the law and us: "Cops see these brick throwers and car burners as almost Al Qaeda-like, down to their transnational

This is what Anarchy
looks like:

By Sunfrog

For the art here
& on page 47, thanks
to Walter
Crane's classic
radical work
available in
the Haymarket
Scrapbook &
elsewhere.

wandering, their
leaders' wealthy back-
grounds, and their fundamentalist message."

Using counter-terrorism and political extremism as blanket excuses, police behave brutally, judges make examples of individuals associated with radical ideas, and government spies accelerate their surveillance of all forms of activism, especially the anti-war, anti-occupation movements. The FBI made its intentions clear in a memo circulated last Fall; the agency makes no apology in naming its perceived enemy at these mass

events: the anarchists.

At the same time, the US Secret Service has intensified the demarcation of “no protest zones” anywhere the Emperor from Texas rears his head. Currently, a North Carolina peace activist is fighting a legal battle for holding a “no blood for oil” sign on the wrong side of the street. The charge? “Threatening the life of the president.” A century ago, anarchists *did* threaten the life of the president; however, what motivates the State to bring these kinds of charges against garden-variety peace activists today?

The current climate of repression is not an anomalous aspect of the Ashcroft-Ridge era of homeland containment. The intensification of libel against advocates of undiluted liberty did not begin when the ink dried on the PATRIOT Act; indeed, the domestic war against dissent has experienced one heyday after another for more than a century. We’d be guilty of our own version of the exceptionalist, historical myopia clouding the minds of the neo-con prophets if we saw our persecution as unique. History shows that the Bush regime is simply fulfilling its duties as States always have.

For much of the last century, political repression was the *modus operandi*. Domestic intelligence was known for its dragnets during the entire five-decade tenure of the notorious J. Edgar Hoover, who began running the FBI in 1924 at a time when the post-World War Red Scare was still in full swing.

The four decades leading up to Hoover’s ascension to top cop were the time of the great anti-anarchist crusades, a period marked by Emma Goldman’s deportation to Russia, the persecution and heroism of the Haymarket martyrs, the assassination of President William McKinley and subsequent execution of Leon Czolgosz, the judicial murder of Joe Hill and Sacco and Vanzetti, and the systematic dismantling of the IWW.

Even during the now-romanticized (by many liberals) Bill Clinton years, domestic intelligence lumped anarchists, animal rights activists, and eco-liberationists together with right-wing militias, klansmen, and cultish sects.

Indeed, it would be truly exceptional to discover a time in North American history since the 19th century when anarchists and other revolutionaries were not the target of baseless accusations in the media and barbaric attacks in the streets.

Appearing before Congress in May 2001, FBI director Louis Freeh declared, “Anarchists and extremist socialist groups—many of which, such as the Workers’ World Party, Reclaim the Streets, and Carnival Against Capitalism—have an international presence and, at times, also represent a potential threat in the United States. For example, anarchists, operating individually and in groups, caused much of the damage during the 1999 World Trade Organization ministerial meeting in Seattle.”

Of those groups, Reclaim the Streets (RTS) is best known for its guerilla dance parties. While Freeh’s statement suggests ludicrous ignorance of the RTS tactics and message, we cannot deny his serious assertion that even dancing, when coupled

with the disruption of commerce and seizure of public space, should be branded as terrorist. His remarks did not go unnoticed in the radical milieu and PB Floyd’s “Is Dancing Terrorism?” provided an eloquent and relevant response in *Slingshot*. (Easily available online by googling the author and title.)

This official denigration disseminates a cloud of fear designed to contaminate the culture of protest. At worst, anarchist-baiting and activist-bashing divide radicals from their natural allies in the struggle for justice. This tactic demonizes anarchism for the general public, forces us to renounce direct action, and splits the ranks of opposition.

Experts at deception, the public relations manipulators working for police precincts and privatized security firms invert the logic of our resistance to authority. They deny us our politics and utopian dreams. The current rhetoric discourages rebellion with its striking historical resemblance to the anti-anarchism of a century ago. While much fear of “dirty immigrant anarchists” has been replaced with condescending condemnations of “spoiled rich kid anarchists with multiple piercings and facial tattoos,” the official disgust serves the same aims of inverting truth and upending dissent. In the 19th century, opinion editors at the

If anarchists hope to participate in popular movements to transform society, they cannot ignore such eerie precedents in the manufacture of public opinion.

Washington Post preached, “Anarchy is tyrant. This is not freedom, it is subjugation of the most intolerable kind. It is the assertion of authority over the enlightened, progressive, liberal American citizen by a horde of foreigners, representing almost the lowest stratum found in humanity’s formulation.”

If anarchists hope to participate in popular movements to transform society, they cannot ignore such eerie precedents in the manufacture of public opinion. The same twisted logic that made the anarchist an authoritarian, then turns a Bush or a Sharon into a peacemaker today. Unfortunately, if the media’s grip on the public imagination can portray a preppy, tepid, bourgeois doctor like Howard Dean as a ranting, radical freak, then it’s chilling to consider what sadistic punditcrats might do with the real radicals and freaks like us.

But our adversaries do not stop with smear campaigns. The recent strategy of attack includes passing strident anti-anarchist statutes, sometimes embedded in laws intended to fight terrorism and protect the homeland. For example, a proposed Rhode Island Homeland Security Bill recently attempted this.

Anarchist activist David Grenier explained at *Infoshop.org*: “It’s an 18 page document, and right on the first page, before talking about weapons of mass destruction or poisoning the water system or anything else that a rational person might consider ‘terrorism,’ it says ‘any person who shall teach or advocate anarchy’ will go to prison for ten years.” Thankfully, this blatantly autocratic law was defeated, but similar legislation can be expected, and laws this audaciously tyrannical continue the crackdown that hounded our predecessors a century ago.

In 1902, New York passed the calculated and brash

"Criminal Anarchy Law" that made it a felony to advocate the "doctrine that organized government should be overthrown."

During the same period, President Theodore Roosevelt declared, "When compared with the suppression of anarchy every other question sinks into insignificance. The anarchist is the enemy of humanity, the enemy of all mankind, and his is a deeper degree of criminality than any other. No immigrant is allowed to come to our shores if he is an anarchist; and no paper published here or abroad should be permitted circulation in this country if it propagates anarchist opinions."

Does this stark battle cry resemble in any way the current president's absolutist war rhetoric? A xenophobic bias helped Roosevelt pass an anti-immigrant law embedded with an anti-anarchist bias and implied recognition of an international movement that would topple all governments.

During this period, New Jersey criminalized the display of red and black flags. Later, at least seven states passed "criminal syndicalism" laws targeting the radical unionism of the IWW. In addition to today's dangerous laws like the USA PATRIOT Act, local communities often pass ridiculously arbitrary anti-protester ordinances in advance of anti-capitalist convergences coming to a particular city. For such laws to successfully stifle protests, the courts will test them by scapegoating and singling out certain protesters and making them into prisoners and examples.

An injury to one is an injury to all

Test cases for the state's success in stigmatizing dissent and frightening future rebels can be seen in the situation of our political prisoners. Against the backdrop of the PATRIOT Act, the recent attacks on African-American anarchist Sherman Austin should give us pause.

Thankfully, even the liberal media has been generous in documenting the draconian hit on Austin, currently doing time for his revolutionary website *Raisethefist.com*. But no matter the widespread sympathy he's earned from civil libertarians, the facts from his case should heighten concern and solidarity in all of us. The judge defended the severity of Austin's sentencing as a way to teach a lesson to those prepared to confront authority. According to Austin, the judge "wanted to set an example for, in his words, future 'revolutionaries.'" (See *FE* #362, Fall 2003)

As bad as Austin's sentence is, the terms of his probation are

similarly ominous. "One of them," he says, "is that I can't associate with any group or persons who advocate violence or political or social or economic change. Basically, I can't associate myself with anarchists. It actually says that on the pre-sentencing report, that I can't associate myself with anarchists or anarchist associations."

Associating with anarchists, writing letters to anarchist 'zines, and reading anarchist literature has also created problems for political prisoners like Jeff "Free" Luers and Rob los Ricos, anarchist writer arrested in Oregon for allegedly attacking a cop during an anti-capitalist insurrection. These comrades are designated by the Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC) as belonging to a "Security Threat Group" because of their anarchist beliefs.

Writing about the unfreedom facing Free, his jailers issued the following statement: "Inmate Luers has a history of involvement and is an influential member of the radical ecology/animal environmental groups; he is recognized worldwide for his beliefs, actions and sacrifices. Inmate Luers is writing statements that is [sic] recruiting and advising others how to be effective while involved in what is called direct action, which means one acts to cause major damage to property and the possibly injury to others. Inmate Luers was convicted for his radical anarchist activities and his conviction was con-



demned worldwide. Many will review inmate Luers' written advice and some may act out from his advice. This type of activity is a direct threat to the safety of the public and causes serious concerns for the security, safety and orderly operations of all ODOC facilities and employees."

Given the recent intensification in profiling anarchists, we all should be concerned about the pending trial of community activist Camilo Viveiros, charged with attacking the notorious John Timoney, police chief of Philadelphia during the Republican National Convention of 2000. We don't need our severe discomfort with Timoney to harness our sympathy for Camilo and his years of preparation for a potentially devastating sentence. As Camilo's supporters insist on his innocence and remind us of his inspiring involvement in nonviolent community activism, we need not create a separate category for his predicament.

For example, even though we know Free was found guilty of torching SUVs in Oregon, we need not enforce a stratification of solidarity for innocent victims and insurrectionary saboteurs.

"Raise the Fist/ you know what I mean by that?/ Ready for liberation/ That's why I started it 4 years back/ it's not some buzzword, it's not some game/ that's probably why the FBI/ had their raid/ actions bring them fear/ with an organized community/ having control over our own lives/ is the real threat to national security"

**—Sherman Austin
#51565-054
Federal Correctional Institution
8901 S. Wilmot Road
Tuscon, AZ 85706**

This is a time when political prisoners everywhere need our solidarity and defendants in political trials need our support. The debates between green and red anarchists or between revolutionaries and lifestylists were fun for a moment, but we need to occasionally transcend staggering sectarianism and offer aid and comfort to our comrades, remembering who our common enemy is.

Disputes within anarchism are ubiquitous not unique, so let's not expect a united front or anything like that. But we can carefully insist on our common purpose when dealing with the totality, when up against verbal lynchings that virtually leave us without recourse or support. Acts of violence—beyond justified property damage and self-defense—are rare in our political struggle, so let's resist the notion that revolutionary anarchists are by definition ultra-violent, doing the cops work for them by separating ourselves into sickening categories.

More than a century ago, newspapers sought to distinguish the eccentric, genius, utopian, philosophical, armchair anarchist from the malicious, immigrant, insane, lowlife, barbarian anarchist. While the poetry of our 19th century suppression would make proud any punk hobos of the *Evasion* nation, the antique journalists calling us vagabonds, tramps, lunatics, desperadoes, monsters, snakes, fugitives, and ruffians intended to ruin us—not romanticize us. Dividing ourselves into increasingly specialized factions based on the smallest discrepancies in our critiques only reinforces this good anarchist/bad anarchist game. We know that the genius and the fugitive are often the same comrade and need not waste blood or ink explaining, apologizing for, or defending the nuanced differences amongst us. The security threats we're worried about do not come from other anarchists; the real threats warm the chairs in Washington.

This is what anarchy looks like

To the majority of people, anarchy means violence and disorder, chaos and confusion. While some of us might find favor in the discordian, metaphysical appeal of chaos, this refers to anarchy more in the spiritual than social sense. As an ideal, anarchy has always meant cooperation, mutual aid, equality, autonomy, and freedom from all forms of hierarchy and domination. Historically, we have promoted anarchy not through random acts but inspirational propaganda and principled direct action.

Anarchism means (to paraphrase Utah Phillips quoting Ammon Hennacy) "we don't need cops to tell us what to do." Anarchism is hardly anathema to the intuitive, anti-authoritarian spirit alive in everybody. Anarchists can take credit for extending the popularity of the libertarian tradition, encouraging the general distrust of bureaucracy, and respecting the "live and let live" ethics of others.

We can go as far back as the Boston Tea Party to remind our critics of the historic legacy of property damage and direct action. Every civil rights struggle since abolition has benefited from the vision and action of anti-statists. Anarchist manifestoes by Henry David Thoreau remain required reading in public schools today because the spirit of civil disobedience and revolutionary direct action were integral to every inch of social change accomplished since the Civil War.

The "soul force" tactics and revolutionary spiritualism endorsed by Martin Luther King, maligned as too liberal by some, share significant philosophical space with the grassroots religious anarchism of Catholic Worker Dorothy Day. King's prophetic rejection of both capitalism and communism for a vision of community that is neither is, in fact, an anarchist ideal.

Perhaps every morning workers in the US should thank anarchists for limiting their misery to just eight-hours, making workplaces less dangerous, and eliminating child labor. Not only did the struggle to save workers from absolute slavery depend on the heroic acts of anarchists, every significant movement to ameliorate misery—from decriminalizing contraception, marijuana, and homosexuality to stopping nuclear war and environmental destruction—has included anar-

chists and anarchist ideals.

What else do open-minded people everywhere take for granted that was created by anarchists? Cooperative models for child-rearing and unschooling; housing, grocery, and agriculture co-ops; barter, mutual aid, and labor exchanges; horizontal structures for interpersonal communication, affinity groups, and consensus decision-making; the entire DIY-movement in healthcare, music, and fashion.

The daily papers make a habit of reciting the reactionary definition of anarchy; just recently, I saw this one, "West Bank residents say anarchy rising"; last summer, the Pentagon hired supercop John Timoney to help "curb anarchy" in recently recolonized Iraq. (I guess they thought he might teach them to do to insurgents over there what he does to us here!) After a century of insult and injury, some of our allies have defected from anarchy, claiming we can never undo the international defamation campaign and citing the same rigid ideological constraints that prepared authoritarian communism for history's compost pile.

But others remain steadfast, speaking defiantly in the face of great travail, like our martyrs and heroes of previous generations. On trial as much for avowed aspirations as alleged actions, condemned Haymarket rebel August Spies reminded an Illinois court in 1886, "Anarchism, this terrible 'ism,' deduces that under a cooperative organization of society, under economic equality and individual independence, the political state will pass into barbaric antiquity. We will be free where

Anarchism does not mean bloodshed, does not mean robbery, arson, etc. These monstrosities are, on the contrary, the characteristic features of capitalism.

there are no longer masters and servants, where there will no longer be any use for the policemen and militia. Anarchism does not mean bloodshed, does not mean robbery, arson, etc. These monstrosities are, on the contrary, the characteristic features of capitalism. Anarchism means peace and tranquility to all. Anarchism means the abolition of causes which produce work and crime."

But can we only quote antiquated anarchists? Why do we need mentors to make a world without masters? What does anarchy look like today?

It looks like worker self-management and families of choice not coercion. It looks likedumpster-diving day-old produce to feed a thousand protesters from a communal kitchen. It looks like cooperative record labels and infoshops, cafés and communes, fragile romances and fertile rebellions. It looks like flowers blooming in reclaimed urban space and squatters making artwork out of renovated buildings. Anarchy looks like reorganizing society to resemble our dreams rather than being forced to live one more day in our nightmares.

To us, anarchy looks like the intoxicated narratives that define books like the *Temporary Autonomous Zone*, forecasting the future as convivial festival, communal meal, and erotic affinity group. Anarchy looks like pamphlets like CrimethInc.'s *Fighting for Our Lives*, asking for nothing less than everything: "Accepting no constraints from without, we countenanced none within ourselves, either, and found that the world opened before us like the petals of a rose."

The pejorative perception of anarchism can be countered by public statements and in the creation of models: autonomous villages, festivals, and community centers. But we can no longer rely on modest attempts to model a collectively managed life to stave off the distorted, ignorant assaults against us. We need to engage in what one tireless anti-corporate activist calls "political self-defense," thus engaging in grassroots, public interaction with neighbors, community groups, and co-workers.

Anarchists Blamed for Anti-EU Letter Bombs

Through late December and early January, explosive devices were mailed to the president of the European Commission, the governor of the European Central Bank, two members of the European Parliament, the directors of the European Union's police and judicial cooperation agencies, and other officials.

According to the January 12th issue of *Time* magazine in Europe, these letter bombs are the work of anarchists organized in "a loose confederation of cells" and who "have taken tactical cues from al-Qaeda." Predictably, the letter bombs motivated the EU's Europol and Eurojust international law enforcement organizations authorities to launch a special multinational police operation (to be followed, no doubt, by special emergency laws, special courts, and special prisons) against the menacing specter of "anarcho-insurrectionalism."

Actually, by most accounts, these "bombs" have been

Anarchists need take risks and engage in deeper acts and pacts of solidarity with other anti-authoritarian radicals who may not identify as anarchist. As the global justice movement grows, we foster alliances with other activists. If our historic mission to free the world of wars and bosses is to survive and thrive through another period of intense contestation with the State and Capital, then we must consider the millions of allies who might be part of an international revolution that can win.

Anarchism is not a threat because anarchists do property damage at large protests and convergences. Anarchism is not a threat because some people are spooked by giant parades that feature puppets, stiltwalkers, clowns, labor organizers, marching bands, radical cheerleaders, drag queens, raging grannies, tattooed crusties, deejays, hippies, pagans, and pirates. Anarchism is not a threat because of our numbers, our influence in the media, our financial resources, or anything that could be called an ordinary political challenge.

Anarchism threatens presidents, polluters, bankers, popes, generals, cops, CEOs, and stockbrokers because it reminds them that their power and privilege are temporary and illusory. It exposes the utter bankruptcy of war, capitalism, and the State without qualification or apology. It is the only ethical, visionary, and uncorrupt political philosophy, yet it asks no pledge, promise, or practical allegiance.

Anarchism is a threat because it reminds individuals that they can live for their desires and prosper without money or property. Anarchism remains a threat because it tells the truth.

—the end of winter 2004, Pumpkin Hollow

FE Note: Sunfrog prepared this as a response to the crack-down, a gift for the movement, and a rant to present at Spring and Summer convergences, like the 9th Annual Bay Area Anarchist Bookfair in San Francisco. The "we," "us," and "ours" are of course rhetorical, not trying to represent other anarchists or even other members of the FE Collective.

described as firecrackers or sparklers, unlikely to incur any injury even under optimum conditions: two devices exploded while secretaries were opening them for their bosses, and the package that had been sent to European Commission president Romano Prodi detonated in his hands with the only damage being a slight burn on his expensive carpet. It's almost as if the packages had been designed specifically not to injure anyone...

Why would self-identified libertarian insurrectionists deliberately provoke more repression for themselves and their comrades just to make such irrelevant gestures? Only statist, general, and homeland security fetishists stand to gain from having mass media outlets shrilly warning of the "anarchist terrorists" in the age of the Global War Against Terrorism.

Italian police have blamed a group in Bologna called the Informal Anarchic Federation (FAI), but no one has stepped forward to claim responsibility for the devices. In fact, anarchists and anarchist organizations in Italy, England, France, Ireland, Sweden, and the US have sent out communiqués announcing that they have no knowledge whatsoever of the Informal Anarchic Federation.

continued on page 35

Tales from the Planet

Operation Rescue Founder Pied by Biotic Baking Brigade

Agents of the Biotic Baking Brigade-ANYC cell pied Operation Rescue founder Randall Terry, who was speaking on behalf of his new anti-abortion group, the Society for Truth and Justice.

The anti-choice group was holding a meek protest outside Planned Parenthood's Manhattan office. Agent Cheesecake served up an organic chocolate cream pie while Terry was ranting to the local media about the evils of homosexuality and abortion.

The pie slinging took place in front of a counter-protest and an absentminded and slow witted 'community affairs' officer of the New York Police Department. This action was dedicated to all those nameless and faceless people who have risked their lives to defend a woman's right to choose worldwide. Biotic Baking Brigade.

<http://www.bioticbakingbrigade.org>

Man, Snakes versus Bank

South African police are looking for a man who released several poisonous snakes at a bank in a revenge attack after his car was repossessed. Issuing a statement to the media from his hiding place, the man said he walked into the bank and "I asked people to move away so that they would not get bitten, then I put my bag on the floor and opened it". The five snakes then slithered into the reception area as panicking staff and customers ran away. He has warned that he will target Absa bank branches across South Africa if the dispute is not resolved.

Traveler Homestead Defends Against Cops in Britain

In mid-January, a horde of cops came to evict a travelers homestead in Great Britain. The bailiffs had arrived shortly after first light with orders to evict the group of travelers from land they had been living on for the last three years. But by the afternoon, the officials had retreated, driven back by burning barricades, trenches filled with flaming rubbish and a human chain which refused to budge. Day one of "the Battle of Bulkington" ended with the travelers claiming victory over Nuneaton and Bedworth council, which insists they must move.

The travelers bought the plot of land in the north Warwickshire village of Bulkington from a farmer almost three years ago, planning to turn it into a model site complete with its own village green. Around 20 families moved in but planning permission for a private travelers' site was refused.

Nevertheless, buildings, fences, and roads began to appear on the land, which is in the green belt. More than a year ago the travelers argued their case in the high court. Though they lost they still refused to give up their homes, prompting the council to call in the bailiffs. But when they arrived the travelers were ready. They set on fire two caravans and an old van which they had parked at the entrance to the site. They also torched rubbish piled into two metre-wide trenches which had been dug around the site. Around 40 men formed a human chain outside the site. A four-hour stand-off, observed by 40 police officers and a number of firefighters, followed before the bailiffs were called off.

Take Over of Factory in Canada

An aluminum smelter at Jonquire, Quebec has been taken over by its workers after the owners announced that the facility would be closed down and sold. The workers are represented by an affiliate of the Canadian Auto Workers union, which backs the action. At press time, the workers were safely running the factory and the local community was protesting the closure. The owner, multi-

national corporate giant Alcan, claims the facility is outdated and its workforce aging. The mill's foremen are making inspections at the mill, which still runs 24 hours a day, "but the operating decisions are being made by the operators."

The Quebec government has named a mediator to try to resolve the dispute.

Los Angeles Critical Mass Rides Through Grocery in Solidarity With Strikers

Entering the parking lot of the Vons at Sunset and Hillhurst (grocery store being picketed by strikers in Southern California), the critical mass group chanted, "Don't cross the line, boycott Vons". After circling the parking lot once to the cheers of the picketing strikers, someone yelled, "Let's ride into the store!" It was one of those amazing things to watch; the energy of an event takes over and everyone seems to be doing what should have been obvious to do. Half of the bicyclists, about twenty or so, entered the store in a single file line and proceeded to ride down various aisles, simultaneously chanting "Don't shop at Vons, support the strike!" Employees and customers alike stood dumbfounded as the group, with helmets on and lights blinking, made their way out of the store and back into the parking lot.

Puerto Rican Students Protest ROTC on Campus

In early January, over 30 students at the University of Puerto Rico took over the Army ROTC building on campus. Enduring threats from ROTC officers, cadets and university security, the students held the building for 24 hours.

Civil disobedience and direct action protests will continue until the demilitarization of the University of Puerto Rico is attained. The encampment that students have maintained since the beginning of the fall semester at the former Air Force ROTC structure stands proudly today as a symbol of dignity and perseverance.

Frente Universitario por la Desmilitarización y la Educación (FUDE)
fude_rum@hotmail.com (787) 969-049

Tlalnepantla declares autonomy

Tlalnepantla, Morelos, Mexico, Jan. 20 (AGR) — On Sunday, Jan. 10, the town of Tlalnepantla declared autonomy from Mexico. The government's response, four days later, was to send an invasion force of 700 police, as well as snipers and helicopters. According to the official report, there was one man killed. According to the townspeople of Tlalnepantla there are many more dead, already disappeared and buried by the police in the mountains surrounding the town. The government has prohibited the passage of human rights groups to enter the mountains in search of such casualties.

Historically, the town officials of Tlalnepantla have been elected through a traditional process called *usos y costumbres* (uses and customs), in which a town assembly reached consensus on who would be the Municipal President. After this process, that person would register with the Institutionalized Revolutionary Party (PRI). In turn, the PRI would sponsor the person elected through *usos y costumbres* as their candidate in the formal elections. This ensured that the Municipal President of Tlalnepantla would always be registered as a candidate supported by the PRI, and at the same time, allowed the town to continue to use their traditional electoral process.

A conflict began this past electoral period of July 2003, when the candidate that was elected through *usos y costumbres* refused to register with the PRI. Upon his refusal, the PRI responded by sponsoring another candidate, Elias Osorio, already notorious for dishonest practices. In the elections, Elias Osorio won with a total of approximately 400 votes, or about 10% of the population. A large number of those votes were the result of bribery and falsehoods. Another factor in the victory of Osorio was the mass confusion in the community that resulted in little participation in the elections.

Sergio Estrada Cajigal, Governor of Morelos: gobernado@morelos.gob.mx

Secretary of Government: gobierno@morelos.gob.mx

Drawing from the *Asheville Global Report*, websites, personal reports, and newswires including Indymedia and the Allied Press Syndicate (www.allied-press.org), *Tales of the Planet* (sometimes known as *Tales of the Police State*) is compiled for the *Fifth Estate* by John Johnson and Tequila Mockingbird.

Please send us your dispatches and blurbs, especially news of unusually heroic and humorous acts against authority. PO Box 6, Liberty, TN 37095 or fiftheestate@pumpkinhollow.net

Bush's Regime Change in Georgia

As expected, Mikheil Saakashvili was elected president of the Republic of Georgia on January 4th, and he did so with about 97% of the vote. Located between Russia and Turkey in the Caucasus Mountains, Georgia had been previously run for at least a dozen years by autocratic thug Eduard Shevardnadze, the former foreign minister of the USSR under Gorbachev. He was forced into early retirement in November by what the Western media has characterized as a popular uprising.

But don't be fooled by the glib news reports praising Saakashvili's political success as a victory for democratic civil society in Georgia, such as the naïve op-ed titled "A Jolt of Democracy in Georgia" that appeared in the bosses' newspaper of record, The New York Times, on January 14. While it is true that, with the exception of ex-Communist Party middle managers who made up his venal and corrupt apparatus, no one was sad to see Shevardnadze go, it must be said that something sure smells fishy about Saakashvili's so-called Rose Revolution.

Despite what you've been told, Saakashvili's election was not the apotheosis of the Georgian people's will for liberal-democratic reform. Beyond the media mirage of heroic, nonviolent, rose-waving rebels, one can see a far more sinister and cynical machinations that should be of concern to radical anti-imperialists, anti-capitalists, and environmentalists. Georgia's Rose Revolution was not a spontaneous revolt by the people, but a carefully orchestrated regime change having more to do with made-in-the-USA Astrotruf than grassroots democracy homegrown in the Caucasus.

The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC)

pipeline development project is the key to understanding the US imperialist conniving that is behind Georgia's Rose Revolution. Upon completion, the BTC pipeline network will be the world's longest, costing well more than the initially proposed \$3.6 billion and capable of extracting and exporting 50 million tons of Caspian oil and natural gas to Western markets beginning in late December 2004.

The fact of the matter is that Saakashvili's ascent to power in Georgia has been stage-managed by Washington Consensus globalization marketeers, the energy-resource extraction industry syndicates that run the White House, and the Pentagon's neoconservative commissars. The objective was to tap into the petroleum wealth of the Caspian Sea that would turn Central Asia into the next Middle East.

— Don LaCoss

Serb president apologizes to Bosnia

In November, the President of Serbia and Montenegro apologized to Bosnia for the 1992-95 war in which some 200,000 people died, most of them Muslims.

The president offered the apology during a visit to Sarajevo where more than 10,000 people died during a siege by Serbian forces that lasted for three and a half years. One-half of the population of the former Yugoslav republic lost their homes during this period and displaced refugees still number in the tens of thousands. Marovic said it was time for forgiveness.

The ethnic cleansing by the racist Bosnian Serb gangs and army was carried to a successful conclusion by 1995. Atrocities defined the period where "organized killings were recreational and sadistic."

Water Activists Face Repression

During the past few months, Michigan activists fighting the global economy's developing market for water extraction have fought a multi-national corporation, the legal system, and the state's liberal governor.

Also, over a thousand people gathered at a local community college to protest water and utility shut-offs in 80,000 Detroit homes alone. But neither Gov. Jennifer Granholm nor any other public official will declare a health emergency or bill amnesty.

The Sweetwater Alliance has an ongoing boycott campaign of Ice Mountain, a Nestle brand, which steals its plastic bottled liquid from Michigan's natural water systems. The Meijer grocery chain refuses to drop this brand despite demands by a coalition of groups.

At one Meijer store protest, activist Marie Mason was arrested for wearing a t-shirt that read "Ask Me About Ice Mountain" as she entered the store.

Although Sweetwater is a non-violent organization, the authorities may have lumped them in with the Earth Liberation Front (ELF). Elves attempted to burn down an Ice Mountain pumping station last September. After the Detroit-based Massasauga Earth First! issued a statement supporting the action, the FBI arrived on the scene and began harassing activists on the frontlines in the aboveground, water protection movement.

The feds also visited people listed as Sweetwater Alliance regional contacts on the organization's website, www.waterissweet.org. Federal prosecutors then issued subpoenas to Mason and her husband Frank Ambrose ordering them to submit palm prints and DNA samples to a federal grand jury in late October. The two initially refused and fought the order in court.

Mason and Ambrose have a history of fighting FBI harassment. Two years ago, a joint terrorism task force in Indiana raided their home, and initiated a campaign of harassment and surveillance against the two and others in the forest activist community. The government brought tree-spiking charges against Frank, but ultimately, these bogus charges were dropped.

People responded to an action alert from the quickly-established Water Defense Committee asking for calls to the US Attorney's office, demanding that the subpoenas be quashed. When the couple's attorney telephoned the federal prosecutor's office about a legal matter, the US Attorney complained that the office couldn't get any work done because of "receiving scores of impolite and harassing" phone calls.

The activists eventually complied with the government demand for their hand prints and DNA rather than face indefinite imprisonment on contempt charges. Even though

they surrendered their samples, they continue to oppose the sweep of grand juries across the country intimidating activists. Their experience reinforces the charge that grand juries do not need any basis of evidence to issue a subpoena. When dealing with a grand jury, you are guilty until proven innocent.

In light of a recently leaked FBI memo detailing efforts to marginalize more radical members of the anti-war movement, the Sweetwater situation makes more sense. If you substitute "anti-water privatization" for "anti-war," then the actions of the local police and FBI seem familiar. They are trying to characterize the Sweetwater Alliance and Massasauga EF! as violent and extreme in the eyes of more moderate groups involved in the fight to protect the water.

Through illegal arrests and subpoenas, the government is attempting to justify the use of repressive tactics to shut down the organizing for which EF! and Sweetwater are known. The FBI stepped in at this particular time because of an anticipated court decision in a case brought against Nestle and the State by the Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation. No matter what the decision, the FBI knew conservative, moderate, and radical groups would work together against a giant like Nestle. In the eyes of the government, a classic divide and conquer strategy was in order.

The early December court decision was a stunning victory for the environmentalists. The judge ordered Nestle to completely cease pumping water and effectively closed the \$150 million plant the multinational built with the hopes of establishing themselves in Michigan.

But no sooner had the victory celebration begun when the governor stepped in on Nestle's behalf. Her legal brief helped convince the appeals court to grant a stay to the order, allowing Nestle to continue raping Michigan. This was a big shock, as Granholm had repeatedly stated her opposition to water diversion and Nestle's operation. Even as she defended the water theft, she continued to talk about her devotion to protecting Michigan's water through legislative initiatives at the beginning of the year.

In response to the Governor, the more moderate water groups quickly released a joint statement complimenting her and compromising

their original demands. They offered to help work on the new water legislation. The Sweetwater Alliance was left alone criticizing the Governor for her duplicity.

It seemed obvious the other groups wanted to distinguish themselves from Sweetwater and backed down from their original demands which had previously had been jointly agreed upon. It also seemed obvious that they wanted to make this distinction because of the adverse attention Sweetwater received because of FBI harassment.

Did the divide and conquer strategy work? Movements remain fluid and the groups which were afraid to criticize the governor have reconsidered their stance. Environmental and social justice activists are coming together again to present a united demand for environmental justice.

Through illegal arrests and subpoenas, the government is attempting to justify the use of repressive tactics



In preparation for the fourth World Social Forum, held in Mumbai, India, January 16-21, a call went out around the world for people to come to Delhi to work out a program of protection for water and water access to be presented to the larger gathering.

Since 2001, the World Social Forum has met to challenge the rules of investment and governance dictated by the corporate World Economic Forum. It proposes democratic, people-centered alternatives to imperialist globalization. Except for this year, it has met in Porto Allegro, Brazil.

I attended as a representative of the Michigan based Sweetwater Alliance, which fights globalization and privatization, and met with water activists from over 63 countries at the first Peoples' World Water Forum. Most of the 200 people participating in the Forum came from the global south, where much of the corporate theft of the world's water has been taking place at an accelerating pace.

At the conclusion of the three day strategy session, the participants launched the Peoples' World Water Movement (PWWM) with two international targets, Coca-Cola and the Suez corporation, as the poster children of corporate water crimes.

We agreed upon six guiding principles as the "tributaries" of the water movement. They are, that water is life and is sacred; that all beings have an inherent right to water; that water privatization is a route to ecological and social disaster; that the theft of groundwater by corporations must be stopped; that we oppose water diversion, dams and the relocation of communities; and that we uphold the necessity of a conservation ethic and seek to develop locally appropriate methods of sustainable water management.

With this program in place, we headed off to the World Social Forum, being held in India for the first time.

I traveled in India for a week prior to the WSF, and was able to see a little bit of daily life. Our host group introduced us to local people engaged in combating the encroachment of multi-nationals in their communities, and it became clear that people took an entirely different attitude towards the world economy, multinationals and even the purpose of a World Social Forum.

Representatives of two of the groups I spoke with, the National Alliance of People's Movement and Samajwadi Jan Parishad, were very adamant in stating that globalization could never happen in a way that benefited their communities. They saw the only role being offered them was as providers of exploited labor and material resources. They were supremely uninterested in negotiating

the terms of what they knew would always be a lop-sided agreement.

Instead, they advocated a total withdrawal from the world economy, and developing local economies only on a small scale. Many people told me that they had no desire to change their way of life for what constituted a European or American middle-class lifestyle.

They consider the constant demand for material things as unsustainable, and want small, appropriate technology, and self-reliant communities that produced the basic necessities of life in their own regions. In this way, they would not fall prey to the lure of money and trade offered by the IMF or World Bank, only to fall victim to the resulting corporate raiding of their natural and human resources to pay the debt incurred.

One discordant note came as some organizations, including the Mumbai Resistance 2004, charged that some of the non governmental organizations (NGOs) present were merely the friendlier face of neo-liberalism. The organizers said the World Social Forum process was initiated by supporters of globalization as a way to tame the anti-globalization wave.

The WSF, however, was such a diverse composite of political tendencies, grassroots groups and foundations involving 125,000 attendees that it was more of a "happening" than an overt and concerted effort to unite the world movements for a global resistance effort. There seemed to be as much dancing as discussion, as much about artwork as action. But even so, there was a genuine sharing of experiences and strategies, as well as efforts made to support movements internationally and especially the plight of political prisoners.

The list of 1,200 workshops was long and exhaustive, from disability rights to domestic violence, ecological concerns and social justice issues, to war and peace. I found great inspiration in the sheer numbers of people interested in organizing resistance. Everywhere were spontaneous demonstrations, dancing, drumming, music and pamphletting. It was chaotic, but beautiful and in many aspects, ran surprisingly smooth for such an immense and diverse event.

Although my stay at the WSF was short, I am especially happy to have met so many people working from the ground up to reclaim their lives from technology and international capital through their day-to-day creation of a life that seeks to recreate a natural, organic, and sustainable relationship to Earth and their community.

—Veronica Lake

radical rabble regional roundup

Asheville Community Resource Center faces eviction by JB and AGR

On Wednesday, Feb. 4, the Asheville Community Resource Center (ACRC) received an eviction notice. This eviction comes in the context of a concerted effort to gentrify the street where the center is located.

The ACRC is an anti-authoritarian collective running a consensus-based community center in downtown Asheville, North Carolina. They house a radical reading room, a venue for performances, the Bike Recyclery, the Asheville Global Report, the Women's and Transgender Health Project, Katuah Earth First!, the Asheville Free School (includes 15-20 home-schooling kids), the Prison Books Program, and Bountiful Cities (a community garden program).

You can send donations to:

Asheville Community Resource Center, PO Box 803 Asheville, NC 28802

Louisville Anarchists Help Resist Police Brutality by LAT

In early January, Michael Newby was shot three times in the back by undercover Louisville Police Department narcotics Officer McKenzie Mattingly, marking the eighth fatal shooting of a black man in recent years. Since the shooting, a steady and constant wave of organized resistance has sought to bring justice to the families and victims of police terrorism. Permitted protests have continued every Sunday afternoon, as they have since the last fatal shooting of James Taylor (who was shot twelve times while handcuffed).

On January 8th the stakes of resistance were raised and people took direct action against the cops. An impromptu and un-permitted snake march/street party erupted, winding its way around the city jail, and back to police headquarters, where three windows were smashed out of the police chief's office. That same night the Chief of Police met with community activists at the Justice Resource Center.

Locally, anti-authoritarians are attempting to become true allies in the struggle for justice in this city. We believe that the anarchist movement must work to build trust and long-term relationships with other communities affected by oppression. We invite anarchists and anti-authoritarians to Louisville, Kentucky to get involved in the campaigns. For more info, contact: stoppolicebrutality@ziplip.com

New Road Planned for East Tennessee - Hwy 64 Ocoee Bypass to Wreck Cherokee National Forest by LAT

Katuah Earth First! is opposing the construction of a new road from Ocoee, to Ducktown, Tennessee. The Tennessee Department of Transportation is proposing the construction of a 20 mile long, 120 ft wide, stretch of highway named Corridor K that will cost \$1.5 billion. This construction would come at the cost of cutting through the Cherokee National Forest, some of it fairly pristine, wild land. TDOT's track record of promptness is laughable, and the duration of such a large, three-part project will only extend the impacts and cause more harm than any anticipated good. KEF! demands that TDOT stop building roads and wrecking our forests. We are prepared to defend the Ocoee. Stand up for our forests; get involved! TDOT has our wilderness in one hand and a dollar in the other, shooting craps with what is not theirs!!! Contact KEF! at P.O. Box 281 Chattanooga, TN 37401 johnjef@bled-soe.net to get involved.

Send a report from your scene!

fifthestate
@pumpkinhollow.net

Up against the WalMart By Tex

Every summer, thousands of Wal-Mart shareholders gather at the Bud Walton arena in Fayetteville, Ark. to celebrate capitalism and the ascension of Wal-Mart as the world's largest company. This year, however, union members, environmentalists, sprawl campaigners, anarchists, peace activists, human rights activists, and all the riff-raff in between will be converging this June to form a unified front against Wal-Mart's policies.

Wal-Mart has made its shareholders extremely rich. Northwest Arkansas is the region that spawned the beast from Bentonville, and which actively supports the Wal-Mart paradigm of marketing cheap goods, paying low wages, and creating urban sprawl.

Shareholder meetings are basically a huge pep-rally supporting union busting and the cheap sweatshop-produced goods that have made Wal-Mart the undisputed champion of retailing.

But resistance to this pre-fabricated spectacle is blooming in the Ozarks. This counterculture and subversion in Wal-Mart's home territory will say, "Enough," to the shareholders who assemble from around the world, June 4-6, in Fayetteville.

There will be free housing, food, workshops, strategy sessions, networking, non-violent actions, and a whole lot of partying as we celebrate the largest movement that Arkansas has seen since Little Rock was desegregated in the 1950s.

Email againsthewal@gofairtrade.net or visit www.againsthewal.org for more information, and to download materials to help you organize your community.

Food not Bombs Gathering by Ikky

Activists from across the mid-south converged in Knoxville in late January for a regional Food Not Bombs (FNB) gathering. Kicked off with a dumpster diving Olympics, the weekend was filled with workshops, discussions, a pirate parade, and public feeding. Many local activists are planning to attend the Food Not Bombs International Gathering before the massive protests against the Republican National Convention.

SELECTING A MASTER OR OUSTING A TYRANT



Richard Mock

RADICAL REFLECTIONS FOR THE SELECTION YEAR

Here in the heart of imperial North America, it's (s)election year, and whether we like it or not, public discourse over the next several months will be dominated by campaign shenanigans.

Finding the proper revolutionary response to this spectacle spawns the usual frustration and debate. While a few antiauthoritarians have joined the "Anybody but Bush" chorus rampant on the liberal-left, others have dusted off their quadrennial rants against the inherently corrupt capitalist system and its permanent war machine, claim to moral supremacy, and façade of representative democracy.

In this section, *Fifth Estate* collective members have contributed and compiled a variety of past and present commen-

taries on the electoral mirage. Your comments are welcome as letters in the next edition.

Please see letters pages for guidelines.

Time to Change Masters

From November 1930, *The Road to Freedom: A Periodical of Anarchist Thought, Work, and Literature*, from the Labadie Collection, University of Michigan.

It matters little whether you vote or not. You will have lost nothing for you have nothing to lose; you will gain nothing because you have nothing to gain through the institution of politics.

He who consciously and deliberately refrains from voting

merely asserts his aloofness from the political cesspool while he who expresses faith in the political machine gives tacit approval to the purpose of politics.

There are many reasons why intelligent men and women should refuse to vote. The sanctity of citizenship has long since been betrayed. Politics is a business pursued for the sole purpose of selfish gain. It is the propaganda end of government through which corporate interests controlling the government gain sanction for their crimes against the public good.

Anarchists do not vote because they oppose the essential principle of government. They do not condemn the individual politician because he is a crook—rather they condemn the system of society that offers him the temptation to rob his fellowmen of their liberties as well as the fruits of their toil. They oppose government because it is based upon physical force, because it protects the rich and impoverishes the poor, declares war and forces workmen to die in battles with which they have nothing to do.

Every vote cast by a workingman is another link in the chain that binds him to an industrial overlord. Freedom from government and the shackles of economic slavery can only come through mass solidarity of the workers on the bread and butter battles lines. When you cast your vote, you signify acquiescence to the political machine that throttles your liberties and robs your children of the natural right to happiness.

Riot one day, vote the next

From "Watching the Dogs Salivate: Remarks on the 1992 Elections," FE #341 Spring 1993; reprinted in *Against the Megamachine: Essays on Empire and its Enemies* (Autonomea).

Despite the palpable fraud, reasoned anarchist arguments against voting never seemed so brittle or flatly rationalistic—something akin to shouting in a vacuum. The declaration that "we" should abstain suggested a coherence in mass society that massification itself had undermined. One could, after all, riot one day and vote the next, but such acts do not in themselves necessarily constitute what radicals have trained ourselves to think they mean, or what dogma might say they mean.

I was sympathetic to those who voted for the challenger simply because they hated the incumbent's guts. What was one more humiliation if you wouldn't have to hear that nasal-rich boy whine of a monster you had grown to abhor with a bitter puissance, and you could see him repudiated rather than vindicated by his own system of prestige?

In Baghdad, people danced in the streets when Bush's defeat was announced. One could hardly blame them; it might have been worth voting just to send them a ray of sunshine and a drop of revenge. Indeed, it was hard to resist the temptation to ruin Bush's day; it was lovely to hear how depressed he became after his defeat . . .

In June 1854, Thoreau asked his journal, "Who can be serene in a country where both rulers and ruled are without principle? The remembrance of the baseness of politicians spoils my walks. My thoughts are murder to the State; I endeavor in vain to observe nature; my thoughts involuntarily go plotting against the State. I trust all just men will conspire."

Some things have changed little since Thoreau's day. Endeavoring in vain to observe nature, my mind involuntarily goes to plotting. Plot against the State; plot against the state of affairs. I hope all just women and men will conspire.

—David Watson

America's refusal to vote may well have more in common with a boycott, a great, unorganized wildcat strike, than with the accepted notion of laziness and disinterest.

In the middle stands the majority, the great undecided. This is your neighbor who put a flag on her car when America invaded Afghanistan, but took it off before the invasion of Iraq.

This person may even show up at a protest, but insists on dragging her flag back out of the closet for the occasion, lest she offend a vocal co-worker who remains staunchly pro-war. She has the vague sense that something is wrong, but can't quite shake the old habits, can't look the great

taboo in the face and say, "That flag does not represent me." But she rarely votes, either.

This person is undecided, uncommitted, but she is hardly apathetic. She may have mixed emotions, but she is anything but unemotional. She cries for the victims, both in New York and in Baghdad. And, for the media to say otherwise because she refuses to vote is a slap in the face, and a gross, self-serving misrepresentation.

In September 2004, the Republican Party will be holding their convention in New York City. The protests outside are sure to be massive and volatile. Will the nation be treated to a repeat of Chicago in 1968? Or, will it be even more violent, as the patriotic commemorators of September 11 spill into the streets to join the police in doing battle with the protesters?

No one knows for sure. There are only three things that may be predicted with confidence: there will be a huge number of people in the street protesting, the actual number will be a topic of much discussion and debate, and the press will portray the American populace as lazy and out-of-touch.

Someone is surely lazy and out-of-touch, but I suspect it is not my neighbor.

—Prolecat

Voting: An Immodest Appeal

Let us experience the changing of the capital guard who guards capital. Let us remind ourselves and our enemies that the lesser of two evils was and is the evil of two lessers, that, sure, if voting really changed anything they'd make it illegal, that voting is a game and we lose, and that slo-gans are made to be broken.

Imagine a new target of derision and disaffection for 2004 and beyond, that we, as anarchists or anti-authoritarians, can lead the charge(s) against a newly elected (promoted) boss and the newly-minted millionaire, who will unintentionally reassert the need for a new system, not new glasses for the same old vision of Domination and Control, the real D.C., in Washington.

Yes, let us urge an alternative error, let us recall the replacement part with another faulty replacement, a new neo-conservative mistake, anybody but the worst of the worst, this rogues' gallery of the empire's neo-fascists, these fryer-ready chickenhawks, these state engineers for WW III (or WW IV, depending on how one tabulates such insanity).

Let us temporarily suspend conscientious non-voting as the Spanish CNT unexpectedly suspended its abstaining stance in 1936; let us vote on our way to the next revolutionary gathering, as if we are only paying for one month's rent, a pay toll, a poll tax(!), as if voting this time could merely cover the cost of a bullet proof vest or gas mask, for some purely defensive necessity in time of war, while we buy a moment to reload and reorganize, and not just react.

If we can choose our friends, why not choose our enemies, at least this time around?

G W Bush, the Sequel to the Sequel, would no longer have to pretend any faked adherence to a system of bounced checks and imbalances. Like any second-term president, Bush as a not-quite-lame-enough lame duck would no longer have to con his constituency for votes. Nihilists and immovable anarchists may collectively shrug at a Bush second term as "finishing the job" of catastrophe, but this hardly inspires non-voting.

So let us *vote*: vote for the paradox, for the temporary execution, and remember it is only an *exercise* for *moving* feet, a small step in the marathon run for radical change.

Final Disclaimer: this appeal does not intend to suggest elections in any way as the final or preferred activity behind closed curtains.

—William Blank

Participating in government elections to vote "against" Bush, misses the point. It's not who you are voting against that is important, but rather what you are voting for. Leaders will come and go, but with participation, the state can live on forever. Of course, if one only thinks of voting as "against," it does make the humiliation more palatable. . . cleanses the soul, so to speak.

If the Fifth Estate makes the statement that, "this time it's OK to vote," then it would certainly be a little disingenuous to

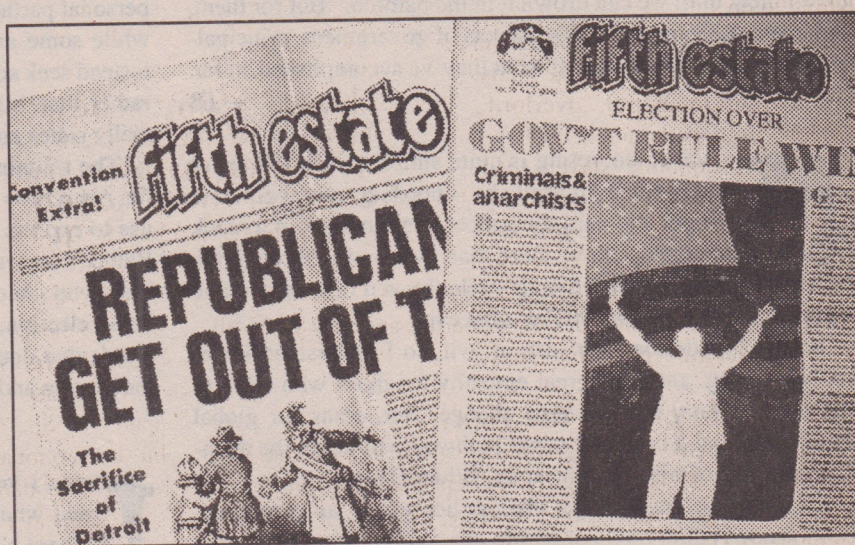
The voter is a man who comes where he is summoned like a flunkie, who comes on the said day and not on any other day.

He is a man who comes when authority says

"The moment is here to sanction one more time a system established by others and for others. The moment is here to put aside one more time the idea of revolt against the organization that exploits you."

The moment is here to say:
I RECOGNIZE YOUR LAWS.

— Georges Mathias Paraf-Javal, 1904



Fifth Estate covers from election years past: "Republicans Get Out of Town," anti-convention special, 1980. "Government Rule Wins," 1984.

continue using the FBI description that the FE "supports the cause of revolution everywhere." We all know there's nothing revolutionary about voting. We would now have to add that the FE sanctions the legitimacy of the state, acceptance of its laws and the global enforcement of the rule of empire by the use of police, armies, death squads, torture, consumerism, and, in short, the elimination of anyone who stands in the way of capital and the state. I think that includes anarchists?!

I find it sad that after all these years and all of the millions murdered by the state, that anarchists are still debating this sorry topic. There are very few anarchists/anti-authoritarians in the USA and to think that some of them are considering giving up the principles and ideas they have fought so hard to sustain, and for which many more comrades have died fighting for, because they are desperate, is truly disheartening. This is one dog that won't be answering the master's voice on election day.

—Larry Talbot

When it comes to participating in electoral politics, I'm a complete cynic. (It's a completely cynical system, after all.) If I thought Kucinich could really create the kind of fundamental change I want to see, I wouldn't be putting my energy into an anarchist movement.

My fondest hope is that alternative media can get the word out on election fraud this time. If enough pressure is applied, and kept up, we can let the Bush regime undermine not only its own legitimacy, but the legitimacy of the whole "liberal democracy" project.

On the other hand, the problem with the "let Bush wreck the system for four more years" argument is that's exactly what he intends to do. At least since Reagan, the conservative agenda has been to "shrink government until we can drown it in the bathtub." But for them, that means keeping the worst aspects of government, principal-ly social control. And look at what they've accomplished so far.

—JB

My stance on voting is quite simple: I don't! I won't compromise myself by choosing one corporate bought and paid for puppet over another, in a mock display of democracy. Now, more than ever, going through the motions of voting is humiliating while the veil of a democratic "land of the free" seems thicker than ever.

Bush has redefined my idea of evil, so I understand lesser evilism voting, and hold great empathy for those who cling to this as their only tool towards change. But, plans for global domination and a crude oil super highway will be on the agenda regardless of who they sit in the White House.

Our only option to make change lies not in an electronic, Bush-funded ballot box, but within our communities, and in the streets. Will Bush try another stolen election? I dare him. A victory for Bush may be a vote for revolution.

—ikkygrrrl

While electoral participation might be the least empowering form of political activity, some activists see it as an absolute necessity this coming November. Since the coup of 2000, left-liberals have been clamoring for an anti-Bush united front in 2004.

Like the so-called progressives, a few anarchists actually got excited about the liberal candidacies of Kucinich, Sharpton, and Dean. Now it looks like we're stuck with the lesser evil of John Kerry in November. Even the ultra-right ideology and totalitarian tendencies of the Bush administration cannot justify how quickly Kerry's candidacy killed the grassroots, anti-war revival among activist Democrats.

Fostering a genuine, popular social and political revolution in America won't be accomplished by voting, but anti-voting ideology isn't instigating deep change either. Rather, fostering a revolutionary mood in America requires creative and sustainable ways to tap into the popular sentiment expressed last year

against war, empire, and Bush.

While a Bush defeat would never change the fundamental political reality of living under crisis capitalism in a unipolar world, the fundamental political spectacle as perceived by the majority of the world's citizens would. Certainly, if Bush is installed again, many across the globe might start to think we really do prefer permanent warfare to our own welfare. Despite our desires, revolution in North America is unlikely before November.

Participating in compromise and coalitions is rarely the first choice for individuals of principle. Even some pacifists feel killing is acceptable in self-defense; some anarchists feel the same logic applies to voting.

As a philosophy, anarchism holds personal participation in political decisions at the highest level; while some anarchists don't believe in politics per se, others instead seek social arrangements where we decide for ourselves rather than blindly delegating that right to others, most especially states and corporations.

The religiosity of "anarchists don't vote" is in one sense a lie. Anarchists vote everyday by the small and large gestures we use to express the vigor of our opposition to authoritarian rule. Rather than waste a single word lambasting any friend or comrade who chooses to vote in this pivotal and perhaps already fixed election, let's create a reality of resistance larger than words that does more than voting to express our opposition to the empire and our desire for a new world.

—Sunfrog

I haven't voted for a president since the 1968 quadrennial fraud where one war criminal, Hubert Humphrey, lost to Richard Nixon, who would become one. I plunked my ballot down for Black Panther leader, Eldridge Cleaver, on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket.

I suspect that was the last time I will enter a voting booth.

Humphrey had disgraced himself, stating infamously, "Vietnam is our finest hour," even though the extent of the imperial slaughter had already been widely exposed. Also, this once famous liberal was nominated beneath the truncheons of the Chicago cops at the uproarious 1968 Democratic Party convention.

The Democratic Vice-President wasn't a candidate who could be made more palatable by invoking the phrase, "the lesser of the two evils," when compared to the dreadful Nixon. In fact, Humphrey was perceived by many of us as being the greater evil, given the Johnson administration's merciless prosecution of its war against Vietnam, and its failure to stop attacks on black leaders and communities.

Did we guess wrong? Nothing could have been worse than Nixon's mad escalation of the war which finally left 3.5 million Vietnamese dead as well as 58,000 of the invaders. Humphrey lost by a mere one half of a percentage point and those abstainers, including me, could have conceivably made a difference in

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the election's outcome. This, of course, assumes Humphrey would have done anything differently.

In the previous election, some radicals backed Johnson over the arch conservative Barry Goldwater, fearing that he represented the extreme anti-communist wing of the Republican Party and, if elected, would involve the US in a large scale ground war in Southeast Asia. It was the liberal Democrat, as it turned out, who did just that. Electoral history is replete with other such examples of how the lesser of two evil voting produced the very evil most feared.

Electoral activity as it relates to somewhat authentic reform doesn't have much of a track record either. One has only to recall the election triumphs of the left in 1936 Spain and 1970 Chile to be a bit apprehensive about what such "victories" achieve. When the will of the people was expressed through the official means provided by the state apparatus, it spurred a fascist revolt followed by decades of repressive dictatorship. It gives even greater weight to the old anarchist saying, "If voting could change anything, it would be illegal."

The question of voting by those opposed to the state and capital arises again as we confront the damage to people and the planet caused by the vile Bush regime in just over three years. However, many of those who should know better have bought into the anti-Bush rhetoric to the extent of accepting the prevailing left/liberal mythology that the 1990s under the Clinton/Gore administrations was some sort of Golden Age with a booming economy and peace.

But this means ignoring NAFTA, de-industrialization and job loss, "welfare reform" (a polite phrase for kicking the poor off the rolls), more cops, one environmental sell-out after the next, and, if we want to keep score of dead Iraqis (and we should), our great liberal icons are responsible for hundreds of thousands of civilian deaths through the enforcement of economic sanctions and thousands of bombing raids on that country. Bush's toll makes him a piker compared to the mountain of corpses Clinton produced.

There's no disagreement that Bush and his corporate and right-wing sponsors have turned the system entirely into a racket for the rich (rather than the crumbs it previously provided). The only positive aspect of this is that it neatly illuminates the true function of government—an apparatus to loot the populace and protect society's rulers.

But Bush policies are so egregious shortsighted that even the financial sector of the U.S. elite class worry that the greed and messianic drive of the dominate right-wing ideology threaten the long term interests of capital itself. When the International Monetary Fund (IMF) warns that Bushonomics endanger the entire world economic system, it is a clear signal that big capital is worried about policies that maximize short term profit over long term financial stability.

That government is based on organized force and looting is

nothing new. The state arose thousands of years ago as an institution to protect wealth and hierarchy and little has changed subsequently. The fact that a few governments in the last 300 years have given a thought to the needs of the ruled is a late development and one which is currently being reversed, particularly in this country. So-called democratic governments are but a footnote in the repressive history of the political state.

BushCo shovels the swag into the maw of the greedy corporations in an unprecedented manner because the opposition is so symbolic. Imperial Rome knew that it needed to provide bread and circuses for the masses, so they would ignore the conditions of their subjugation. Now, Bush offers only television circuses in the form of terror alerts and wars against the empire's great enemies no matter what pipsqueaks they really are, plus the usual fare of media titillation.

There are no grand movements of opposition even as the country's infrastructure deteriorates, schools close, prices rise and more and more jobs move to areas in which the wage structures are what the capitalists hope will soon be the world norm.

This will not be altered by the election of what has traditionally been the other half of the ruling political con game. George W. Bush and John Kerry, the presumptive Democratic presidential candidate at this writing, are fellow members of the secretive, upper class, good old boy, Yale-based Skull and Bones society, and it is unclear whether the latter's election would signal an abrupt change in the disastrous Republican policies, or just a change of faces.

Gwendolyn Mink, author of *Welfare's End*, and currently writing a book on the Democratic Party, said, "The Kerry campaign seems to be focused on demonstrating the candidate's martial virtue to win over the warrior electorate. Combined with his unapologetic defense of his vote giving Bush carte blanche to invade Iraq, the masculinist Kerry campaign raises disturbing questions about just how much he would change current foreign and military policy."

It would be an excellent sign if the American people at least showed enough collective fortitude and plain common sense to handily reject someone who is destroying their standard of living, lied about reasons for war, and is giving the store away to the rich. But screw voting as a means of stopping Bush. The real question is, "Why aren't there hundreds of thousands out in the streets banging pots and pans demanding social and economic justice such as we've seen in South American countries?" The answer is stuff for another article, but ultimately it is the most important question we face.

Those who oppose the state on principle but are willing to abandon the concept based on a perceived need to defeat Bush, should probably just go ahead. Particularly if they can get past the sequential humiliation of wage work, followed by voting on the day designated for choosing your ruler.

However, I wonder what those people in the anarchist milieu think they will accomplish by casting an isolated ballot that

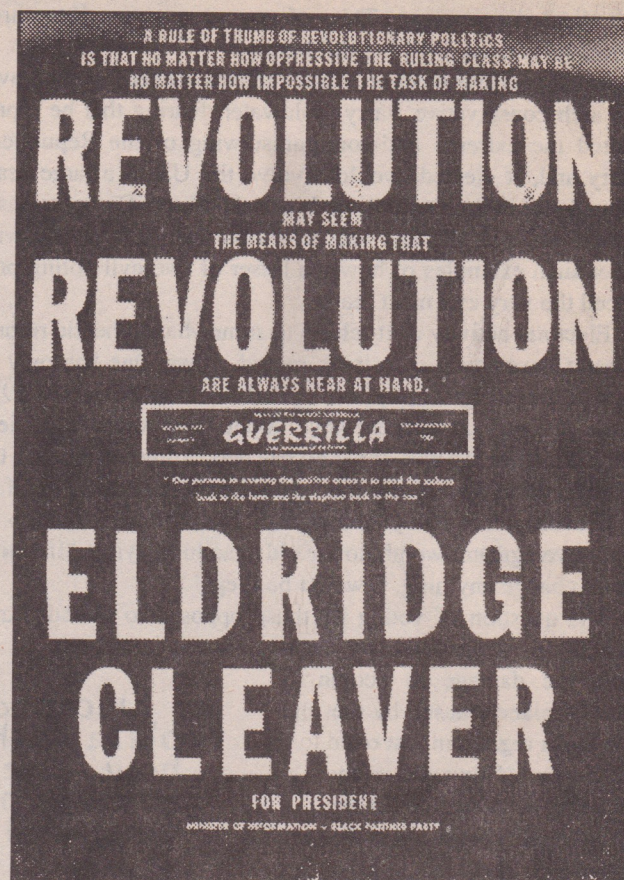
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matters little in the aggregate total. There certainly aren't enough of us to constitute an anti-authoritarian bloc of voters, and I doubt if we'll see an Anarchists for Kerry committee being established to urge disaffected radicals to register and vote.

So, at best, voting is an empty gesture born of an understandable frustration of being unable to accomplish our goals through traditional anarchist direct action and community building, but at worst, rather pathetic—a sacrifice of principle for nothing in return.

—Walker Lane

1968: the first and last time the *Fifth Estate* endorsed a presidential candidate, Eldridge Cleaver, Minister of Information, the Black Panther Party. The small text on this centerfold poster reads: "A rule of thumb of revolutionary politics is that no matter how oppressive the ruling class may be, no matter how impossible the task of making revolution may seem, the means of making that revolution are always near at hand. 'Our purpose in entering the political arena is to send the jackass back to the farm and the elephant back to the zoo.'"



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the strange history of the word "democracy"

Francis Dupuis-Déri

Surprisingly, the Founding Fathers of the United States were anti-democrats. Democracy is supposed to be a regime where the people rule themselves directly. Such a system was thought to be favourable to the poor, who would easily have the majority at assembly. Writers and politicians who used the word "democracy" shared a quite negative opinion of the political value of such a regime.

The first speakers of English who settled in America were the Puritans who arrived in Massachusetts in 1629. For the majority of them, "democracy" had a major flaw: it is not a type of regime mentioned in the Bible. In the Puritan mind, democracy generally referred to chaos, irrationality and meanness. The founders of the US were self-proclaimed anti-democrats.

During the War of Independence, in order to distinguish themselves from the radical fringe, mainstream Patriot leaders and members of colonial assemblies — such as John Adams — opposed "democracy" to "republic": "I was always for a free republic," claimed Adams, "not a democracy, which is [an] arbitrary, tyrannical, bloody, cruel, and intolerable ... government."

The goal of the "revolution" against the United Kingdom was not to give more power to the people but to increase the power of the institution they were members of, and consequently, their own power. As noted Alexander Hamilton, "Our separation from the mother country cannot be called a revolution ... There have been no changes in the laws, no one's interests have been interfered with, everyone remains in his place, and all that is altered is that the seat of government is changed."

Assemblymen were openly against "democracy," but they referred, however, to the fiction of the representation of the people's sovereignty so as to gain popular legitimacy for their struggle. Representation and (direct) democracy were then two opposite concepts. Thus, no Americans understood that "democracy" was what motivated them to embrace the Patriotic cause. "Democracy" was neither the dream of mainstream Patriots nor the name they gave to their dream.

A few Americans took the opportunity of the War of Independence to advocate economic equality, and some openly referred to their program as the embodiment of the "democratic" ideal. For instance, the radicals of Mecklenburg

County, North Carolina, instructed their elected delegates in November 1776 to write a Constitution for the State, that it was to be a "simple democracy, or as near it is possible." Moreover, they must "oppose everything that leans to aristocracy or power in the hands of the rich and chief men exercised to the oppression of the poor." However, after Independence, a number of Patriot leaders shared the feeling that a too "democratic" spirit had blossomed up on American soil. A constitutional convention in Philadelphia, mainly determined by a drive to get rid of the democratic spirit, resulted in the drafting of the federal constitution and the official creation of the "United States." James Madison wrote of Alexander Hamilton, "He sees evils operating in the States which must soon cure the people of their fondness for democracies." Other delegates talked of "the excess of democracy," of "the turbulence and follies of democracy," of the "vices of democracy,"

of democracy as "evil".

The Convention of Philadelphia was followed by a public debate opposing the so-called "Federalists" and the

so-called "anti-Federalists." The "Federalists" clearly distinguished their project — a "republic" — from their opponents' ideal — "democracy." "Democracy" was for the Federalist an object of contempt. For one of them, for instance, "A simple democracy, or an unbalanced republic, is one of the greatest evils."

While blaming the poor and "democracy" on the one hand, the delegates in Philadelphia praised the people on the other. The myth of popular sovereignty was used to establish the legitimacy of the new political system. Yet, no serious debates dealt with the rule of the people. Delegates did not intend to offer the people any real means to rule. Pompous declarations about the sovereignty of the people were uttered simultaneously with statements about keeping the people out of the decision-making process. James Belknap, father of New England, declared: "Let it stand as a principle that government originates from the people; but let the people be taught that they are not able to govern themselves."

It is only around 1830 that political actors discovered it was easier to get elected when they identified themselves with "democracy". Then the term became broadly used in a laudatory fashion as another tool to manufacture consent by making the masses think that the system is ruled by and for the people.

Pompous declarations about the sovereignty of the people were uttered simultaneously with statements about keeping the people out of the decision-making process.

FIXING ELECTIONS

by Jeri Mandering

It's not the voting that's democracy; it's the counting.

—Tom Stoppard

Electoral fraud is as old as elections. Societies that brag about traditions of electoral democracy can also claim a continuous history of electoral crime and chicanery. It's a safe bet that large-scale electoral racketeering will not end with the Florida flimflam of 2000 and the judicial coup d'état that installed the Bush-Cheney regime.

Vote fraud in the US can be found all along its 225-year timeline in venues ranging from high-school class officer elections to the smallest village council nose-counts to municipal primaries to national presidential campaigns.

Elections—like televised presidential debates—are the exclusive property of the Republican and the Democratic wings of the USA's single-party ruling elite. They pick the candidates, set the rules, determine how and when those rules are enforced, and they announce the results. In this way, the ruling class has narrowed the political bandwidth to a sliver of what's really out there, and you are forced to choose from within that narrow field. This problem cannot be solved by run-off voting, parliamentary systems, or any other partial proposal for more parties capitulating to capital's rule.

The laughable proposition made by apologists is that somehow the two-party system will check itself and balance out any biases. This lousy refried Adam Smith-style logic also says that unfettered market capitalist competition will regulate itself. Think of it this way: regardless of how closely Pepsi monitors Coca-Cola, or how spirited the competition, you'll never get the chance to sip homemade dandelion wine as long as you are forced to choose between two cola manufacturers.

The long-term effect this has had on the very notion of democratic self-rule has been insidious. Because elections are constantly equated with the ideals attributed to democracies and republics, the full implications of what it would mean to live in a participatory community has been cheapened, diluted, and distorted.

As the world prepares for the spectacle of Occupied Iraq's make-believe, made-in-USA election in late June, you've got to

wonder who is going to select the candidates, how the votes will be tallied, and who it will be that will be doing the counting and the backroom juggling.

Just as the US capitalist system absolutely requires at least 4% unemployment at all times in order to function, the US electoral system can only operate as its masters have designed if a fraction more than the 50% of those eligible turn up at the polls. This is why voter registration is so bureaucratically complex, why the locations of polling stations are so difficult to discern, and why Election Day is not a holiday. (Imagine what would happen if more workers had the day off and had time to go and vote).

Generally speaking, the most strident vote-reformers seem to be motivated by a patriotically devout appreciation for the

Constitution and the election process prescribed therein. In their activism, they refuse to listen to anti-authoritarian and anti-statist arguments about why voting under the current system will never help to create a free society. Instead, they lash out angrily at the anarchist critique of election mythologies

Because elections are constantly equated with the ideals attributed to democracies and republics, the full implications of what it would mean to live in a participatory community has been cheapened, diluted, and distorted.

and denounce such thinking as disempowering, cynical, and defeatist.

But for those who have never trusted the way elections happen in the US, stories of voter fraud and ballot manipulation corroborate what's assumed to be typical. Rather than agitating for voting reform, retelling stories of voter fraud underscores the futility of using the helplessly ruined system of vote-casting to effect change.

Tales of conspiracy and deceit, such as those surrounding the outrageously corrupt US presidential elections of 2000, ought to convince most people who might vote in November to find a more meaningful channel for direct-democratic political participation.

The fiasco in Florida is the subject of the 2002 agit-documentary, *Unprecedented: The 2000 Presidential Election*. As an ugly chronicle of State-sanctioned voter purge lists, monumental conflicts of interest, and political opportunism of the most rancid sort, this film unintentionally makes a very strong case against voting in governmental elections. Though

ostensibly meant as a call for reform, *Unprecedented* bolsters the anarchists' case for continued electoral boycotts. The Fix is in, so don't even bother going to the voting booth.

Like many other apathetic and outraged people, I boycotted the November 2000 presidential race between Tweedledee and Tweedledumber. Some liberal and social democratic friends threw a house party on the night of Election Day, so that they could all watch the voting results being announced, and I was invited as the token class-war curmudgeon. But, as it turned out, I had the last laugh and gloated for months afterward. It was the kind of farce that you'd expect to see in some post-colonial dictatorship in the mid-1960s. Even Fidel Castro recognized it. In a hilarious piece of diplomatic slapstick, the Cuban president-for-life sarcastically offered to send neutral observers to Florida to monitor the recount process in order to ensure that the process was free from corruption.

Unprecedented tells you all you need to know about why the US electoral system will never work. This 50-minute exposé is based on leftist Greg Palast's investigative reports and examines how voting outcomes in Florida were engineered before and after Election Day to benefit Bush and the Republican wing of the ruling party.

All the usual crooks are brought in for the line-up: Florida governor and smarmy 2008 presidential hopeful Jeb Bush, Florida secretary of state and drag-queen role model Katherine Harris, Bush clan attack dog James Baker, and US Supreme Court Judge Antonin Scalia. Unfortunately, the filmmakers also give short shrift to an unmistakably sleazy story of massive fraud that would also make an interesting documentary: the overseas military absentee votes that the Bush gang miraculously produced at the last minute.

Documentarians Joan Sekler and Richard R. Pérez provide quick sketches of what went down in 2000 in the Sunshine State. For example, there were instances of African-Americans being stripped of voting rights by an extremely haphazard and inaccurate felon identification system implemented by the State government. Black voters were intimidated by State troopers, harassed at the polls by election officials, and misidentified as ex-convicts who had forced to surrender their right to vote once imprisoned.

The narrative in *Unprecedented* hints broadly that these irregularities are part of a broader pattern of bigotry and ignorance exhibited by Jeb Bush's administration, and the film seeks to mobilize outrage on the basis that there had been widespread discrimination by the Florida government against African-American voters. Unquestionably, racism and white supremacy play a huge part in the frankly undemocratic way governments are erected all across the US, but the real issue here is how the ruling institutions are empowered to invalidate the voting choices of a specific cross-section of people of the government's choosing.

Obviously, the bureaucratic machinery of elections and voter registration cannot be repaired by a federal order to Florida state employees to attend racial sensitivity workshops. For substantial and meaningful change, people need to seek more direct avenues of political action than submitting to the November nonsense of the voting booth.

There's a kind of naïve moral outrage to *Unprecedented* that treats the Florida 2000 situation as some kind of freakish miscarriage of the US voting process concocted by the cynical old-guard of the Republican Party. But the more jaded eye will see it as simple confirmation that the terminally impaired US voting system is built entirely upon lawyers' knavery and the hocus-pocus of sideshow mountebanks with expensive haircuts.

Take a look at the sort of reform that the Florida farce directly encouraged: electronic voting. Amid all the ballyhoo about pregnant, dimpled, and hanging chads on punch-card ballots during the Florida recount, cries went out to make voting more efficient, and, predictably the cybercrats came to the rescue with a computerized touch-screen panacea.

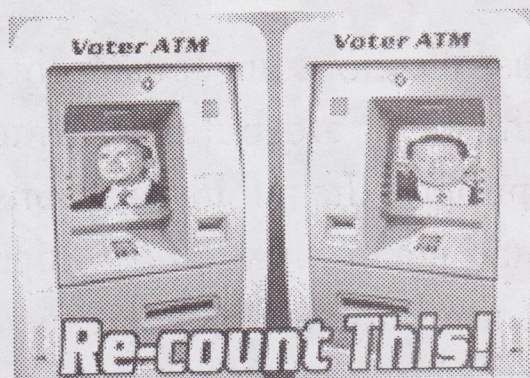
As a consequence, the Help America Vote Act was passed by the US Congress which decreed that election officials replace lever and punch-card voting machines with electronic systems in time for the 2006 mid-term national elections. But as folks like Bev Harris have shown (see her book and website *Black Box Voting: Ballot Tampering in the 21st Century*), such technology is utterly unreliable and subject to mistakes and tampering. The Florida recount was the worst kind of travesty, but at least there was a paper trail to illustrate the system's failure. Not so with the latest computerized voting networks—today, Diebold, ES&S and Sequioa systems are already in place in 37 states.

Other serious problems within the electronic systems of voting and registration include frightening possibilities for commercial privacy intrusions, identity theft, and police surveillance.

For those who believe that democracy is something different than going to a polling station to ritualistically submit to preordained political decisions, *Unprecedented* is a pitch-black dark comedy about the inner workings of the US voting racket.

Any anarchist worth her salt will be able to see through the liberal-left reformism. After all, as abhorrent and sociopathic as the Bush Administration has been in the last four years, can anyone really say how a Gore-Lieberman regime would have been less violent, less capitalist, less statist, and less authoritarian?

When November 2004 comes, which of the two leading former members of the privileged Skull and Bones Club secret society will you support? Does it matter which white male millionaire war criminal the people proudly vote for?



IF WAR IS THE LAST STEP . . . THEN VOTING IS THE FIRST!



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To vote is to sanctify the government's right to make war in your "defense" and in your name. To kill, maim, terrorize and torture people, yourself included, in both secret and conventional wars.

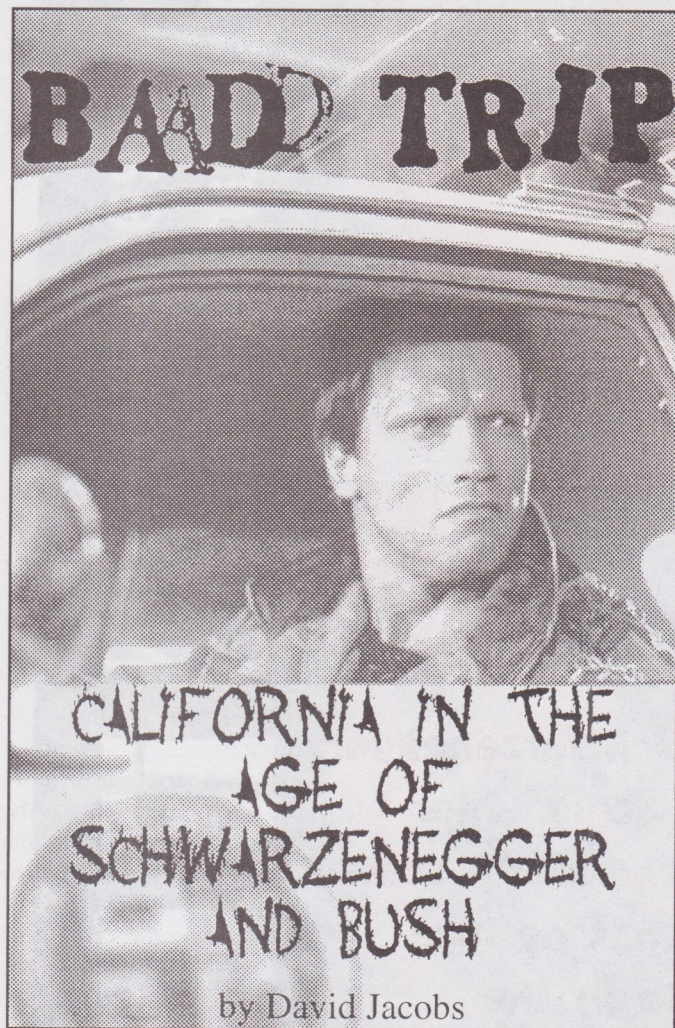
If voting is one of the first acts in giving your life over to the control of the state and its agencies, to do as they please when they please, then it makes sense

when they please, then it makes sense
that refusing to vote is one of the first
steps in taking it back.

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urbane gorilla



After the election of Arnold Schwarzenegger as the new governor of California, most people could be forgiven for thinking that something much less than a political cataclysm has occurred in this state. The inhabitants go about their routines of work and leisure; there are no torchlight parades, or even rumors of same, to celebrate the victory of the former admirer of Hitler, Schwarzenegger, over the spectral and aptly named Gray Davis.

So far, Californians show little likelihood of trading in their running shoes for jackboots. One half of the state is still shaking its collective head at the election outcome; the other, those who have given the Austrian-born actor a new starring role, this time in Sacramento rather than Hollywood, have already "moved on" and are in search of new thrills.

After the election, the sky doesn't seem to have fallen, and one knows that much of what passes for politics in the United States is purely epiphenomenal. Real power resides elsewhere, in the instances of the National Security State and the corporate elite, so why all the fuss over who warms the governor's chair in California? There have been actors in Californian and national politics before; Schwarzenegger is a member, by proxy, of the Kennedy family; he's a Republican, but without a

hard right agenda; he may even owe his victory to the fact that he had no political program whatsoever aside from the box office value of his celebrity status. It is hardly more catastrophic than any other election in recent times in this country, one might say. Wasn't a professional wrestler elected governor of the "progressive" state of Minnesota just a few years back?

But if sober analysis is usually preferable to apocalyptic interpretation when it comes to American elections, it would be a mistake to underestimate the importance of the Schwarzenegger phenomenon, coming as it does while the Iraq War can hardly be called over, and with the California recall election taking place just a few months after the streets of San Francisco and other American cities were filled with antiwar protesters, to such an extent that some on the left could plausibly, if giddily, proclaim that the protesters represented the "other global superpower." San Francisco, to be sure, voted massively against Schwarzenegger, who fared badly in the Bay Area as a whole, and along the northern coast of the state. It is tempting to see the Schwarzenegger campaign as being purely a product of Southern California, with the northern half of the state being held hostage by the demographic power of the south.

Still, to have Schwarzenegger—for all of his movie star glamour, a member of the war party—elected while American casualties (to say nothing of Iraqi ones) continue in Iraq, and while Bush has come under sustained scrutiny for the lies used to promote the Iraq war in the first place, suggests that a kind of cognitive dissonance, or at least selective amnesia, was evidenced in the recall election. People who were apparently against Bush, or against Bush's war, still found it possible to vote for the recall and for Bush's candidate for governor.

During the antiwar marches, when the political momentum in California, and in the country as a whole, seemed to shift in a massive repudiation of Bush and his policies, one of the popular slogans chanted by the marchers was, "This is what democracy looks like!" Faced with the results of the recall election, one is forced at the very least, to re-evaluate the proposition contained in this phrase. Either the recall wasn't democratic, or the people were deluded, or both.

Even allowing for the obviously denatured quality of a process conducted essentially via television and under the sign of the Almighty Dollar, we are uncomfortably close to the situation described in Brecht's famous remark about the people's vanguard, when being faced with a population refusing its leadership, having to "elect another people."

An argument based on the idea of the masses simply being duped is always tempting—and is not necessarily wrong for its simplicity—but it is also a copout. It absolves people of any responsibility for the consequences of their actions, and it trivializes the end result. In any case, it is an argument based on assumptions of "politics as usual," and at the very least, one has learned by now that politics in the era of Bush is anything but usual. By itself, the Schwarzenegger phenomenon is startling enough; when placed in the context of the ambitions of the Bush-Cheney regime, it is profoundly disturbing.

FANTASY AND UNCERTAINTY, RECESSION AND RACISM

Most obviously, the recall campaign took place after more than two years of a recession which was characterized first, and dramatically so in California, by the collapse of the speculative bubble surrounding the "dot.com economy" of the late 1990s. This downturn has produced a high and persistent rate of unemployment in California, and resulted in the drastic reduction of state revenues, thereby creating a fiscal crisis at the level of state government.

As the incumbent, Davis came to personify this crisis, even though its origins—like the Californian electricity crisis which followed in its wake—lay elsewhere, in the cyclical nature of capitalist economics, and in the case of the so-called electricity crisis, in specific policies of the Bush administration, which pursued a policy of deregulation at all costs, or at costs which would benefit its friends in the energy brokerage business, like the Houston-based Enron corporation.

The recession, and its transformation of the economic outlook for California from exhilarating fantasy (the Bush government seeks to complete and extend the "Reagan revolution," to drastically revise the de facto social contract in the United States in the direction of an unregulated and unlimited private sector based on illusions of an endless expansion) to one of uncertainty and precariousness, created the environment in which the recall campaign took place.

But that the recall found such fertile terrain must also be explained by the fact that the political ground had already been softened up by decades of right-wing populism in California centered on the initiative process.

Beginning with the Prop. 13 "taxpayers' revolt," and on through the Prop. 157 anti-immigrant hysteria, an "anti-establishment," nativist message was crafted, one which provided an obvious blueprint for the Schwarzenegger campaign. Ironically, the initiative process, a legacy of the Progressive era in California, has become a vehicle for a kind of petit-bourgeois, Poujadist resentment whose target is never the ruling class, but "special interests" in the form of minorities and labor.

An educational system structurally and chronically underfunded due to the success of Prop. 13 bears the brunt of voter anger which simply lashes out at the status quo, all the while further entrenching the existing system of corporate power.

In the recall campaign, Schwarzenegger's handlers played the race card in a shrewd way. Their candidate could point to his immigrant origins and emphasize his Austrian accent, all the while exploiting the "illegal immigrant driver's license" issue to play on the fears of Anglo Californians, who have been fed

propaganda for years on rightwing talk radio about a Mexican "invasion," hyperbole which has risen to the level of hysteria about a "reconquest" which would result in "Mexifornia," a state in which non-Hispanic natives would supposedly be deprived of their "birthright." To a sense of economic insecurity was added a dose of existential anxiety, both serving as fuel for the recall.

UNILATERAL DOMINANCE AND UNLIMITED DOLLARS

For the Bush administration, the California recall presented an unhoped-for target of opportunity, allowing for a kind of pre-emptive strike in which politics in the state could be destabilized and, through Schwarzenegger's election, captured at least nominally for the Republican Party. In this sense, the recall represented the success of a kind of bloodless "executive action" plan, one in keeping with the Bush administration's modus operandi in other areas, both foreign and domestic. And beyond its immediate impact in California, Schwarzenegger's election becomes truly scary when seen as part of a general state of exception that defines political rule in the United States at present.

Politics in the era of Bush, Cheney, and Rumsfeld has increasingly come to resemble something extraordinary, as more closely resembling the tactics associated with the times of Bush's grandfather, Prescott, the banker to the Nazis, than the corporate suite style of his father, the former president. In the 2000 election, the Bush campaign deployed its operatives in Florida and

nationally, in a well-financed and well-organized operation to secure power, at whatever cost.

Once power was obtained, the Bush administration set about to systematically implement its campaign program, much to the chagrin of the usually blasé members of the political class in the United States, who were slow to realize the extent of the ambitions of the Bush-Cheney regime—and the term regime seems most appropriate to a government which came to power in the manner in which this one did.

Having clawed their way to power, Bush and Cheney set about to make use of it. In doing so, they clarified what had seemed a mystery during the Clinton years, i.e., just why the American right had savaged Clinton, who after all had accommodated Wall Street and played well in Silicon Valley, pursuing a centrist domestic and foreign policy which hardly jeopardized American pre-eminence in the post-Cold War world. The Bush-Cheney faction of the American ruling class, which emanated directly from the oil and defense industries, was not content with mere pre-eminence, however. Its interpretation of "the unipolar moment" created by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War was to

The election of Schwarzenegger becomes truly scary when seen as part of a general state of exception that defines political rule in the United States at present.



unilaterally assert American claims to a global authority, to a universal supremacy which brooks no rival or competitor and is backed by military force.

The Bush government seeks to complete and extend the "Reagan revolution," to drastically revise the de facto social contract in the United States in the direction of an unregulated and unlimited private sector, while simultaneously consolidating American power globally through the accumulation of overwhelming force, and internally through the dramatic extension of the military-intelligence complex, to the extent that politics in the United States now seems simply to be the agenda of the National Security State writ large. The September 11th catastrophe created the opportunity for the implementation of this ambitious program.

Since then, the Bush administration, much in the manner of the Likud in Israel, has sought to create certain permanent "facts on the ground." The invasion of Iraq, and the projection of American military power which this war represented, was part of a continuum which began with the repudiation of the Kyoto Protocols on global warming and the ABM treaty on the deployment of antimissile weapons. The quagmire which the occupation of Iraq now represents will interrupt the momentum

of American unilateralism, but it will not break it, at least as long as the neo-conservatives hold sway in Washington.

Bush and company seek to institutionalize their power by means of sustained high levels of military spending and the incorporation of neo-conservative doctrine as the operating manual of the American security state. Domestically, their program is one of rollback and privatization to a degree even undreamed of in the Reagan era.

Where public relations ploys fail in the implementation of their strategy, they have few scruples about resorting to a policy of intimidation and the criminalization of dissent in order to neutralize opposition to their policies. Recent revelations about a Cointelpro-type surveillance of the antiwar movement by the Ashcroft Justice Department only emphasize the degree to which the current administration has resorted to special measures as instruments of its rule.

FROM TERMINATOR TO DOMINATOR: ACTION HERO IN DYSTOPIA

Arnold Schwarzenegger's fictive on-screen powers are now enhanced by real temporal authority, but it is doubtful that many will make any distinction between the "real" and the "unreal." Should the image of Schwarzenegger the Action Hero become tarnished by revelations about his actions in real life, he may very well find an indulgent or sympathetic audience, for this would be in keeping with public attitudes toward celebrities, whose failures make them "human" and therefore, in many instances, more appealing. Conversely, should the Terminator become the Dominator, it is conceivable that his exercise of authoritarian power might be enjoyed, as a kind of masochistic

Both Schwarzenegger and his Hummer are exaggerated yet representative products of a society whose absurdity no longer shocks because it is so pervasive.

experience of erotic submission, by that multitude which has already succumbed to his charms as screen idol and star candidate.

The image of Schwarzenegger at the wheel of his Hummer—a monstrosity developed originally as a military vehicle, the Humvee—is emblematic of all that is wrong in contemporary California, and the United States, for that matter. Not only is a moron at the wheel; the vehicle is militarized, relies on huge amounts of petroleum, and is antithetical to any sense of human scale or natural beauty. Both Schwarzenegger and his Hummer are exaggerated yet representative products of a society whose absurdity no longer shocks because it is so pervasive.

As governor, Schwarzenegger merely has to show up in Sacramento to earn a certain "credibility," very much in the manner of George W. Bush, whose mere ability to utter a complete English sentence was offered as "proof" of his

intellectual abilities during the presidential campaign of 2000.

Schwarzenegger has made no secret of his tilt toward business, and this will ensure that California workers will be at even more of a disadvantage when confronted by corporate demands, as in the current Southern California grocery strike, for givebacks on health benefits and salaries; his policies are likely to encourage more unplanned and unnatural growth, more use of nonrenewable and nuclear energy, leading to further degradation of an overstressed environment.

Bush will be looking to a successful performance by Schwarzenegger to push California to the right and thereby help ensure a Republican victory at the national level in 2004. In spite of an occupation in Iraq that seems to become messier and bloodier by the day, a Bush victory in 2004 cannot be discounted at this point, and this prospect only underlines the fact that it does matter that this particular group of people is in power at this time.

It is not just the abstract "movement of capital" we are witnessing, but a world in which human agents make decisions and execute commands. It is also obviously a world in which orders are obeyed, triggers are pulled, and decisions are implemented. Putting Bush in Washington, and Schwarzenegger in California, does have consequences.

BEYOND MACHINE DREAMS: IS ANOTHER WORLD POSSIBLE?

For many people, it is a matter of supreme unimportance who is governor, or who is president. There is something healthy, and perhaps quintessentially American, about this popular disdain for power and prestige, and for those who incarnate these qualities.

But to paraphrase Trotsky's famous quip about war, you may not be interested in the state, but the state is interested in you. Power does require acquiescence, or at least indifference, on the part of the masses. Even those most uninterested in political issues are not immune to the effects of government decisions or the consequences of unbridled corporate power in the world.

At present, where even the most modest curtailment of the National Security State seems a utopian undertaking, there may be no harm in thinking speculatively about alternatives to the status quo, and dreaming big. If even incremental change seems remote, one may as well think about more fundamental, systemic change addressing the root causes of the socio-political disaster and environmental catastrophe that the world of Bush and Schwarzenegger represents.

There is certainly no project of radical social transformation on the immediate horizon in California: one must look elsewhere, where the crisis of hypercapitalism is much more articulated, for that. It is instructive to look at a few recent examples of institutional crisis in another part of the Americas. In Argentina, where IMF-imposed plans created mass unemployment and a collapse in the living standards, the slogan of the rioters in Buenos Aires in 2001 was "¡Que se vayan todos!" which can be roughly translated as "Throw them all out, every last one!" If there was perhaps a small echo of this in the "throw the bums out" mentality of California voters, there was also something fundamentally different. In Argentina,

not only did the government fall, but alternative forms of social power were created in neighborhood assemblies and in the actions of the radical piquetero movement, which continues into the present. In Bolivia, another radical social movement recently caused the downfall of the government.

Clearly, California is not Argentina or Bolivia, although its corporations and banks are part of the world system that creates and enforces the conditions that led to such radical results in those countries. And certainly some in California are aware of this: during the antiwar marches of earlier this year, a slogan borrowed from the anti-globalization movement simply stated "Another World is Possible." Of course it is, but saying so doesn't make it so. For another world to appear, or even to be envisioned by large numbers of people, one needs to offer a compelling alternative, an emancipatory vision, and not simply a miserabilist denunciation of the reigning order and its many odious features. What made the antiwar demonstrations of the past year interesting was the spontaneity and imaginativeness displayed by thousands of people in the streets, not the droning speeches from leftist ideologues or the crowdpleasing rhetoric of Democratic politicians on the speakers' platform.

Another, better world is definitely not going to be made with the authoritarian troglodytes of International ANSWER and Not in Our Name, who should be left to "defend" Stalinist North Korea and the Maoist Shining Path by themselves. Unfortunately, many on the anti-authoritarian left, who do have a critique of the indefensible politics of the antiwar coalitions, demonstrated their own failure of imagination in being unable to put forward the project of a different kind of antiwar



movement, and through this, a different kind of movement for social change.

This is an admittedly tall order for any contemporary movement to achieve, but staying in a dependent position vis-à-vis the major antiwar coalitions, and functioning, in effect, simply as their left wing, ensured that nothing of the kind could even be started.

Where the anti-authoritarian left did try to distinguish itself from the mainstream antiwar movement, it ran into a cul-de-sac largely of its own making. Opting for direct action and a kind of moralistic unilateralism in which certain laudable actions (shutting down the business district of San Francisco, and "bringing the war home" in other areas) were pursued without the inclusion of the very people (ordinary office workers, for example) the actions were supposed to influence, it found itself without the mass base that any further extension of its activities would require. Ironically, in so doing, it showed itself to be just as "vanguardist" as the Marxist-Leninist parties.

A collective movement for radical social change will not be inaugurated by sheer pre-emption or a kind of maximalist rhetoric emptily proclaiming that there is "no war but the class war." The affinity groups of the Spanish anarchists—which serve as a direct model for much of today's direct action and anti-globalization protest—were embedded in a radicalized working class with its own organizations, newspapers, and oppositional culture. The anti-authoritarian left in the United States is a long way from creating such an alternative social space, and to be fair there are a host of reasons why this is so, rooted in historical processes and the social composition of much of this movement, which, for all of its well-intentioned concern for "the people," is largely confined to the radicalized intelligentsia and the urban bohemian milieu.

In the post-Fordist world of hypercapitalism, whose very development fragments and disrupts solidarities based on commonalities of social class and social space, replacing them with a segmented workforce and a diffusely organized social environment, it is hard to imagine where new communities of resistance will arise. At the same time, one knows that the very "progress" of the present world system will inevitably generate more contradictions, more crises, more opposition to its dominion.

In the first days of the Schwarzenegger administration, California largely presents a negative example to itself and to the world. It combines physical gigantism with a shrinking of social possibilities, resulting in the paradoxical coexistence of vast technical capacities and knowledge with a determination of their potential use based largely on market or military criteria. The current California model generates both material and intellectual impoverishment, the latter manifested in a collective incapacity to imagine and pursue possibilities other than those imposed in the present epoch.

Inevitably, however, technocapitalism cannot reproduce socially the kind of integrated circuitry at the core of its silicon empire. There are barriers, interruption, surges; above all, there is the "human factor" which does not fit into the equations of the planners and programmers and which will always seek something beyond the machine dreams of the present social order. —Palo Alto, November 24, 2003

This is an excerpt from a much larger work. For more information,

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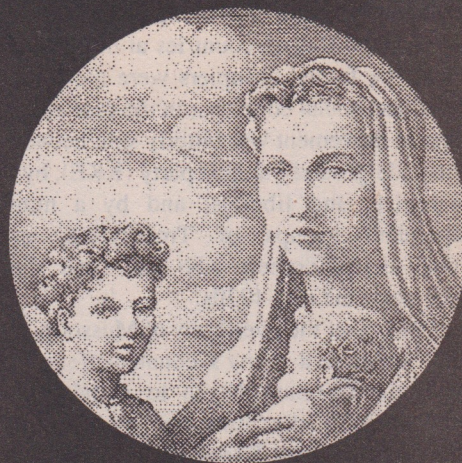
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DEMOCRACY IN IRAQ: NOTES ON A GREEK TRAGEDY

BY DON LACOSS



Ironically, Iraqi Shi'ite Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani is currently disrupting US plans to democratize Iraq by demanding that the upcoming election process be more democratic. The Coalition Provisional Authority has balked at al-Sistani's proposals, as it prefers the process for creating a new government to be a "selectocracy," a series of easily stage-managed regional representative caucuses that can produce the most manageable batch of Iraqi collaborators. Al-Sistani and his followers, however, are calling for a more immediate and more direct process that would curtail external manipulation and the policing of election results by the US.

Shi'ite democracy wouldn't be any more free or fair than the one arranged by the combat-boots-and-pinstripe-suit imperial proconsulship of Paul Bremmer and the assorted other heavily-armed corporate carpetbaggers that presently rule Iraq. For one thing, al-Sistani's scheme probably would result in the creation of a piously-observant Shi'ite ruling class. The only form of government possibly more oppressive than military rule is a theocracy. But the whole affair raises at least one theoretical question worth considering: just what kind of democracy would satisfy the CEOs and professional serial killers that presently run the US government?

Of course, the miserabilist Bush-Cheney notion of democracy bears absolutely no resemblance to the intricate consensus decision-making and direct democracy practiced by collectives and communities that we all admire. While progressives naïvely cling to the abstract ideals of democracy, anarchists recognize that, in general, "democratization," "democratic," and "democracy" are meaningless code words used by authorities to abstract and bury the essences of freedom, self-determination, and autonomy under institutions of coercion, compulsory conformity, and the "common good."

Nonetheless, the State propagandists' relentless blather about democracy in the Middle East is calculated to make the Empire's colonization of Iraq seem altruistic (and to distract us from previous malarkey about Saddam Hussein's massive weapons stockpile). As anti-authoritarians and anticrats, we cannot allow the excuse of democratization to legitimate the

monstrous use of hideous force by the institutions of Anglo-US capitalism against peoples everywhere.

Understanding history can help us avoid having our critical observations neutralized by smug publicity for more Cruise missile democracy. Since a blizzard of lies will assuredly blow around like depleted-uranium dust as US imperialists discuss future military actions in the Middle East, it may be instructive to understand how to begin to criticize their endless spew of pro-democracy twaddle. This can be accomplished by articulating the rampant unfreedom in the definition of democracy used by the Bush-Cheney regime.

One of the most explicit explanations came out of Bush's mouth amid a major policy statement about building democracy in the Middle East. The declaration was read on November 6 to the board of the National Endowment for Democracy at the US Chamber of Commerce:

We're working closely with Iraqi citizens as they prepare a constitution, as they move toward free elections and take increasing responsibility for their own affairs. As in the defense of Greece in 1947, and later in the Berlin Airlift, the strength and will of free peoples are now being tested before a watching world. And we will meet this test. [Applause]

In this grim statement, Bush likened the project of creating democracy in Iraq by occupation to the situation that resulted from the US intervention in the Greek Civil War nearly sixty years ago. Although it is almost certain that the ignorant Jughead has no historical knowledge of what had happened in Greece in the mid-1940s, you can be certain that the neoconservative Politburo that pulls his strings carefully researched every word of this manifesto. Let us consider, then, what democracy means to the US ruling junta, by examining it in the context of "the defense of Greece in 1947."

FROM NAZI OCCUPATION TO BRITISH OCCUPATION

As part of their campaigns in eastern Central Europe, Nazi troops invaded and occupied Greece in late spring of 1941. Many Greek military units fled for British-controlled North Africa, and an anti-Axis Greek government was set up in exile while bands of armed resistance fighters

spontaneously began organizing themselves in Greece.

As in other Balkan countries at the time, the partisans who attacked the fascist occupiers were motivated by a variety of political and social concerns; in the case of Greece, the popular resistance movement was bitterly split between groups directed by the underground Stalinist party (KKE), by pro-British Greek monarchists and liberals, and by a number of smaller, independent groups of Trotskyists, anarchists, ethnic nationalists, and others who had been fighting fascism in Greece since the mid-1930s.

In 1943, after the overthrow of Mussolini and the resurgence of the Soviet Red Army's counter-offensive in Southeastern Europe, the Germans began to withdraw from the region. Greece was officially "liberated" by British troops in 1944; in October of that year, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin redrew the map of the postwar world and agreed that that 90% of Greece would be put under a joint British-US sphere of influence.

Like the Nazis before them, the British occupation forces re-activated local authority structures to maintain law and order. In turn, the Greek government-in-exile, closely aligned itself with the British military and ordered the resistance movement to disband and to turn in their weapons. Many did, but the left-wing and ethnic factions, outraged by the persistence of pro-fascist elements in the government, refused to do so, vowing instead to continue their fight for freedom.

Within weeks, the former anti-Nazi resistance had regrouped itself into an insurgency against the British occupation. The experience of the Nazi occupation formed the basis for suspicions about national security, public order, and justice apparatuses.

More British troops were brought in to buttress the center-right Greek government, primarily soldiers mustered from the native population in colonized India. But Greek and British soldiers who had been stationed in Alexandria, Egypt mutinied: they were in uniform to fight fascism, their soldier committee representatives said, not to help fascist sympathizers secure power in Athens (the rebellion was quickly snuffed out and news of it was covered up). Tanks, armored cars, and heavy artillery were being used more frequently against the insurgency.

Streetcars loaded with explosives plowed into British tanks on street corners in the major cities, while workers, students, and political activists disrupted urban life with a series of noisy mass demonstrations. A general strike in Athens was called in

December 1944 against the Greek government that had been established by British fiat. Although demonstrations had been outlawed by British authorities, thousands converged on Constitution Square to voice their opinions. Greek police opened fire and at least ten unarmed demonstrators were killed and more than one hundred wounded.

British paratroopers moved in later that day to clear Constitution Square, but many protestors filtered out into surrounding neighborhoods and continued to attack buildings symbolic of the government's authority (such as police stations) for weeks afterward. Martial law was declared, but two days after the Constitution Square shootings, hundreds of thousands of protestors turned up for the funerals of those slain with banners that read "British Soldiers: We Want to Choose Our Own Government."

Churchill felt it necessary to personally fly to Athens to show British support for the Greek government. While there, he charged "We have to hold and dominate Athens...with bloodshed if necessary."

The British eventually defeated the partisans, but only after they had committed large numbers of troops to occupying Greece. The British solution to calming unruly internal political sectarianism was to arrange for an entirely new Greek government—a monarchy—to be formed in conjunction with the archbishop of Athens.

Violence by fascist and ultra-monarchist gangs who had been armed by the British to maintain order was widespread, and many former Nazi collaborators continued to exert power over the Greek people. Some resistance fighters who were KKE loyalists crossed the border into Yugoslavia, where they were given safe haven by Tito.





Dispossessed photo by James Seymour

This alliance panicked the nascent Cold War strategists in London and Washington DC, but, as is the case today in the popular resistance against the Anglo-US occupation in Iraq, it is important to remember that there were many other factions involved in insurrectionary activities. Whereas today we are told that the Iraqi resistance movement consists of an unholy alliance of "diehard Ba'athists" and "foreign terrorists," the explanation given by the US government to Western newspapers fifty-seven years ago was that "anarcho-Slavonic-communists" and "bandits" were destabilizing Greece. In both cases, the truth is much more complicated.

Early in 1947, military exhaustion, political resistance in London, and worsening economic difficulties pressed the British government to tell US President Harry Truman that it could no longer maintain control in Greece and that it was withdrawing its military.

THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE, 1947-49

At this point, the insurgency had developed into a full-fledged civil war. Confronted by the very real possibility that anti-occupation and possibly pro-Soviet rebels would overthrow the corrupt right-wing oligarchy that the British had installed in power, the US government unveiled a foreign policy initiative that would suffocate popular liberation movements around the world for the next fifty years: the Truman Doctrine.

This policy became a cornerstone of Cold War neo-colonialism; as Truman explained it, the US government and military would brazenly intervene in the internal affairs of any nation that did not comply with the global political and economic objectives of the US.

Propping up the foundering rightist regime in the Greek Civil War would be the first laboratory experiment on how to implement the new Truman Doctrine, and the US quickly flooded the Greek government with more than \$300 million (in 1947 US dollars) to help "modernize" the army in its fight against the insurgency.

Britain helped out by donating fifty fighter planes equipped with the very latest in mass-murdering technology, napalm bombs. Emboldened by the Truman Doctrine, rightist death squads lynched and decapitated political opponents. Roving bands of armed vigilantes indiscriminately opened fire with machine guns in working-class districts in cities like Salonika in the spring of 1947, but no gunmen were ever arrested; meanwhile, police and military dragnets of left-wing neighborhoods helped make the

prison population twice what it had been six years before.

US officials continuously portrayed the strife in Greece as the product of a nefarious Kremlin plot, but to this day, no evidence has ever emerged to show that Soviet aggression was behind the insurgency.

Much of the US paranoia about Communist conspiracies in the Greek Civil War was a result of absolute ignorance over the

Greek and British soldiers who had been stationed in Alexandria, Egypt mutinied: they were in uniform to fight fascism, their soldier committee representatives said, not to help fascist sympathizers secure power in Athens...

doctrinal points held by opposing factions of European Marxists, just as there has been so many stupid mistakes made by the US today because of the lack of knowledge about the intricate cultural variations among Islamic and Arabic communities.

The self-deluding belief that his regime was fighting the Communist bogey monster in Greece justified all manner of abuses in the eyes of Truman in his "defense of Greece," just as Bush and his henchmen have been using the Global War Against Terrorism™ as a geopolitical blank check.

Actually, in many respects, the resemblance between Bush's plan to "democratize" Iraq as part of his new Middle Eastern strategy and the reckless Realpolitik of the Truman Doctrine are depressingly similar. Truman's excuse for the massively increased US commitment to the violent extreme rightists was prompted, he said, by the "terrorist activities of several thousand armed men, led by Communists."

Bush's fixation on terrorism is limited to those acts committed by Muslim non-State actors and ignores the daily

atrocities committed by his allies, such as the ferocious military dictatorships in Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Pakistan. Similarly, Truman chose not to be at all concerned by State terror being enacted by those receiving US aid in Greece.

One of the results of Truman's rationalizations in Greece in the mid-1940s was a harsh crackdown on dissidents in Greece which rivaled some of the worse aspects of Stalin's own dictatorship. For example, anyone who publicly criticized the Greek government, the police, or the US were bundled off to grim Aegean island "re-education camps" without charges or a trial.

Historians who have uncovered some of the arrest records say that the oldest prisoner on one of these islands was an eighty year-old woman and the youngest (not counting the numerous suckling infants) to be a fourteen year-old girl. Prisoners were almost invariably subjected to arbitrary, inhumane treatment and warehoused in overcrowded, unsanitary holding cells without medical treatment or adequate fresh water.

Before long, the US government was in the position to plan and execute every aspect of the Greek economy, a degree of penetration that they would attempt to replicate throughout Western Europe through the mechanisms of the Marshall Plan for postwar reconstruction.

US operatives infiltrated "all aspects of Greek governmental affairs," one former official of the American Mission for Aid to Greece (AMAG) recalled. AMAG

bureaucrats congratulated Greek police for "courageously tackling" the unstable situation in their country by executing political prisoners, including those involved in the 1944 uprising against the British. Simultaneously, they repudiated media reports about wide-spread right-wing terrorism and the abominable conditions in Greek prisons and re-education camps in interviews and congressional hearings, saying things like the jailing of "enemies of the state" was "quite necessary and justifiable."

According to journalists for mainstream US and British newspapers in the mid-1940s, the Greek government routinely used mass arrests, torture, and the forced expulsion of political undesirables—in fact, the government's foreign minister had resigned in disgust in early 1946 because of rampant "terrorism by state organs." US reporters who pursued these stories were often pressured by US government officials and their editors to examine their "unpatriotic" views.

One CBS correspondent who had been particularly outspoken in his criticism of the Truman government's unqualified support for the rightist authoritarian regime in Greece was tortured, murdered, and dumped into Salonika Bay. In the late 1970s, the story emerged as to how AMAG

authorities helped the Greek police frame two young communists for his death.

Numerous paramilitary and parastate organizations with memberships drawn from the criminal underworld were created for dirty work and became a lasting feature of the Greek government for the next thirty years. Working in conjunction with US and British intelligence agents, Greek security services accumulated files on 80-90% of the population; in the US, the FBI spied on Greek-American communities and compiled reports on possible subversive sympathies. The permanent CIA station established in Athens after 1947 became one of the preeminent US intelligence outposts in Europe for the next forty years.

By November 1947, a joint US-Greek army staff was established, and the government's US masters demanded that freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and the right to strike against one's employer all be outlawed. Martial law was declared by the US proxies in the Greek government, meaning the incarceration of thousands of people as threats to national security, as well as the immediate execution of dozens of soldiers in the National Army "who showed negligence or faintheartedness" in the opinion of the commanding officer.

Napalm airstrikes against guerrilla forces and "suspect" rural villages increased in number, and Greek military officers began requesting flamethrowers and poison gas from their US sponsors. Within a year, there were

NUMEROUS paramilitary and parastate organizations with memberships drawn from the criminal underworld were created for dirty work and became a lasting feature of the Greek government for the next thirty years.

about 500 US troops under AMAG control who were serving as military advisors, intelligence directors, and battlefield commanders despite repeated statements to the contrary issued to the press and to the US Congress by the Truman Administration.

Meanwhile, the war-weary insurgents were squabbling among themselves over tactical and political issues, such as whether to abandon smash-and-grab guerrilla warfare tactics in favor of securing and defending territorial gains on behalf of a "provisional democratic government of Free Greece," the latter decision a fatal one in light of increased use of US artillery and aerial bombardments.

When the US supreme military commander in Greece reported that the "international Communist gangsters" had been defeated, Truman announced to the US Congress in November 1949 that the Greek Civil War was over. By the early 1950s, the Truman Doctrine alibi would be invoked to explain a war in Korea and the overthrow of an elected government in Guatemala.

The destruction to property in the Greek Civil War far exceeded the amount of damage done during the Nazi invasion, occupation, and withdrawal. The civil war had left at least

100,000 dead, three-quarters of a million people homeless, and 30,000 children living in forced exile outside of Greece in refugee camps. At least 25,000 Greeks were chucked out of the country by the US-backed regime and forced to relocate under Eastern Bloc dictatorships for the duration of their lives.

THIS IS WHAT A BUSH DEMOCRACY LOOKS LIKE

It has been widely assumed that a Stalinist government would have prevailed in Greece had Truman not intervened in the civil war. Not surprisingly, in the late 1960s, Johnson used the word "democracy" to describe Truman's authoritarian successes in Greece as a historical antecedent to his own support of the anticommunist police state in South Vietnam.

The fact of the matter is that any interest that Moscow might have had in a Soviet Greece evaporated immediately after Tito broke ranks with the USSR, at which point Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe became far more important to Stalin. The rebel leaders were more interested in reading the latest translations of Mao Zedong's (yet untested) theories on guerrilla warfare than any official directives that may have been issued from the Soviet Union. Moreover, outside of the KKE cadres, the amount and quality of Marxist rhetoric among the insurgents was meager, suggesting that the rebels were motivated by something other than Soviet foreign policy.

What is certain, however, is that, as a result of the US "defense of Greece in 1947," a long, awful succession of right-wing governments representing the interests of conservative Christian monarchists, bourgeois autocrats, trigger-happy fascist patriots, and US industrialists kept the country's jails full.

Letter Bombs

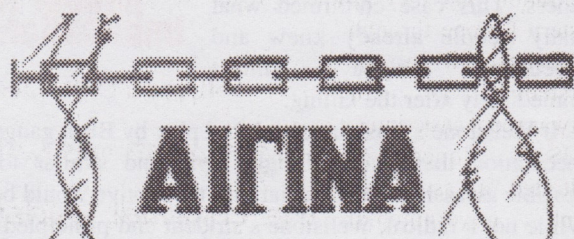
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In a December 28 announcement, the Italian Anarchist Federation of Bologna (whose acronym also happens to be "FAI") suggested that the Informal Anarchic Federation may be a fiction manufactured by authorities to justify a clampdown on anti-capitalist activity. They cited the notorious "strategy of tension" operations conducted by the Italian secret services, the army, and the police in the late 1970s as a historical precedent. The worst of the "strategy of tension" incidents was the bombing of a second-class passengers' waiting room at the Bologna railroad station in 1980.

At the time, it was the single worst terrorist atrocity in European history, killing 85 and injuring 200. Revolutionary anti-statists were blamed, and it was six years before an independent investigation exposed the real culprits as neo-fascist agents provocateur on the payroll of the Italian intelligence and paramilitary police authorities. More recently, police in Milan were empowered to crack down on a number of radical squats and social centers thanks to a strangely convenient letter bomb campaign in 1997. Likewise, it was persistent rumors about letter bombs that triggered the bloody carabinieri raids on sleeping anti-globalization activists during the July 2001 G8 summit in Genoa.

The resulting xenophobic, anti-intellectual garrison state was exceedingly brutal in its efforts to safeguard national security and honor cultural tradition against social decadence. Arbitrary arrest and torture by security forces was commonplace; books deemed decadent or subversive (such as Plato's *The Republic*) were banned and destroyed; mini-skirts were criminalized and young male university students who wore their hair long risked being beaten and barbered by the police or paramilitary vigilantes. Until the fall of the dictatorship in 1974, the murderous Greek colonels were ardent supporters of NATO and of the Truman Doctrine's unilateral, neo-colonial interventions in the name of democracy.

The Bush gang's use of the history of US intervention on behalf of monarcho-fascists in the Greek Civil War as an analogy for regime change in Iraq illustrates their idea of what democracy means. Clearly, their democracy has nothing whatsoever to do with the rudiments of human liberty, self-determination, and autonomy. It is, instead, as we have said all along, a democracy of senseless State violence, war profiteering, rigged elections, barbed-wire compounds, media blackouts, and thousands of dead and mutilated children.



Of course, it may turn out that the anti-EU letter bombings were not part of an anti-anarchist police plot. After all, there are those within the anarchist milieu who think that blind, terroristic bursts of coercive force somehow advance the anti-authoritarian cause, so there could be those who feel that, despite all the counter-productive side effects and backlash, weak explosive devices sent to bureaucrats might somehow magically destroy the State and capitalism.

But if the putative Informal Anarchic Federation is at all serious in its commitment to undermining the EU Leviathan, then it must do more than scorch the carpets of paper-pushers with concealed fireworks. Such adolescent stunts do nothing more than provide anxious police goon squads and fear-mongering politicians with more excuses for unleashing heavier repression against communities of struggle committed to anti-EU dissent.

For Improved Aim and Sharpened Arguments

In a reflection on the Unabomber that appeared in the pages of *Fifth Estate* eight years ago, David Watson wrote: "Suppressing a natural sympathy for his victims—in the larger scheme of things, most of them were little more than bystanders—some people secretly rooted for the Unabomber. Perhaps they did so hoping that he would improve his aim while sharpening his arguments." If the anti-EU mail bombs were indeed the work of anarchists, then perhaps we should all hope for their improved aim and sharpened arguments, as well.

Plan Wellstone:

Conspiracy, Complicity, and the Left

Back in October 2002, driving from the hills to the anti-war rally in the city, we had plenty of time to talk. Conversation immediately turned to a possible conspiracy behind the plane crash the previous day. Did Bush's people assassinate liberal senator Paul Wellstone just days before his possible re-election?

To assume a sinister government plot each time a liberal or radical figure dies is a stretch, but to ignore the possibility entirely is denial. In a 1999 civil suit, lawyer William Pepper convinced a jury in Memphis that prophetic peace and civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr. was not terminated by a lone killer but by a vast conspiracy that included the FBI, CIA, the military, and others. This case confirmed what many people already knew and speculated since almost immediately after the killing.

If Wellstone's crash involved foul play by Bush gangsters (a speculation that's compellingly eerie and similar to other possible assassinations by aviation), the motive would be clear. While not a radical, Wellstone's strident and principled liberal agenda threatened the Republican grip on congress and Bush's unabashed imperial ambitions.

In 2001, talking passionately with a close friend in the wake of 9/11, I broached the topic: Do you think Bush knew this was coming, refused to prevent it, and used it to his advantage? The response was quick and blunt: "You can't say that."

Americans can talk of Stalin and Hitler's hideous crimes but when talk turns to the malevolence inherent in the American empire, critics are told to beware of what "you cannot say." Of course, plenty of people do speculate about the criminal syndicate controlling American political life, and the conspiracy theory milieu has been experiencing an electronic revival since 9/11. But while the academic intelligentsia can tolerate 33 flavors of dense discourse and post-structuralist, neo-marxist mish-mash, most of the left's tenured spokespersons from Chomsky to Zinn get silent or turn heel when activists mention cabals and conspiracies, secret societies and draconian strategies.

Conspiracies refer to intentional, malicious acts planned in secret; conspiracy theory is the writing, research, and debate devoted to uncovering and explaining these. Sometimes, conspiracy theory pushes a legalistic agenda for punishing the perpetrators; other times, the work analyzes conspiracy as an inherent function of excessive power.

The editors of a forthcoming encyclopedia of conspiracy theories define the larger genre like this: "In short, conspiracy theories are a popular explanation of the workings of power,

responsibility, and causality in the unfolding of events. They have appealed to both the left and the right, both the uneducated and scholars, and have been told both by and about those at the very heart of power."

By bringing hearty suspicion, healthy fascination, and critical thinking to conspiracies and anti-conspiracy orthodoxies alike, anarchists, free-thinkers, and independent ultra-leftists might have some interesting things to offer this conversation. Radicals and anarchists might reject the common kneejerk allergy to conspiracy theory; on the other hand, conspiracists should abandon their thick, detailed research long enough to ponder the revolutionary implications of what they discover.

While cruel conspiracies of authoritarian military, political, economic, and religious control do exist, while conspiracy research has evolved into a widely-practiced and published genre of inquiry, most radicals, leftists, and some anarchists join the sober, centrist mainstream in marginalizing and rejecting the dialogue out-of-hand, lest they be implicated with the preachy, paranoid conspiracy buffs. This essay seeks to resuscitate conspiracy theory for radicals and combat the conclusive condemnation it receives by the left's most esteemed and outspoken critics.

Conspiracy: Left, right, and weird

Conspiracy chatter comes in many colors and is a rather all-American fascination. Conspiracy crawls onto television with the popular *X-Files* and sneaks into Hollywood with Oliver Stone's epic *JFK*. In a way, the Kennedy assassination is to conspiracy theory as Shakespeare is to theater. For now, I'm most interested in the scenarios sketched, questions raised, and actions implied by political conspiracies. If any tendency unites the far-flung suppositions of conspiracists across the ideological divide, it's the idea that conspiracies are motivated by pure and unmitigated evil. Questioning the nature and existence of this "evil"—if it exists at all—often takes on a mystical quality, which is one of many reasons that rational thinkers tend to reject conspiracy theories out of hand.

On the right, conspiracies describe a one-world, secular, communist super-state engineered by jackbooted Democratic Party bureaucrats and tree-hugging New Agers at the United Nations; almost always, this paranoia clings to guns and god for justification and promotes racism and ethnophobia. Its most successful recruiting tools include the mid-1990s government attacks on the Branch-Davidians and the patriots at Ruby Ridge. For the last decade, this brand of suspicious and

While radicals might reject the kneejerk allergy to conspiracy theory, conspiracists should ponder the revolutionary implications of their research

specious mania has found a mainstream bully pulpit on right-wing talk radio.

Perhaps motivated by a profound distaste for the conspiracies of the right—especially when we are the targets—many left activists promote an ideological aversion to conspiracy theory. But conspiracy theory does have a potent radical tendency that traces all evil to a power-obsessed elite of corporate and government criminals hell-bent on global, imperial domination. As many of the conspiracies embedded in the military, corporate, intelligence complex are exposed as fact, the lines between radical conspiracy theory and radical journalism blur.

Today, everyone views the 1960s and 70s attacks on militant African-American and Native-American activists by the government's malicious COINTELPRO apparatus as fact. However, like many State plans to suppress rebellious groups and populations, it emerged in a climate of secrecy. While many identify that counter-intelligence program as an isolated part of a corrupt 1970s intelligence community, those practices continued with the 1980s infiltration of groups opposing US intervention in Central America and providing Sanctuary to refugees. Then, COINTELPRO was born again in the bombing of an Earth First! shero, Judi Bari. Before her death, Bari remarked, "There is something else I need to say about the bombing: Was this bombing done by a lone person?—by a lone, angry logger or whomever? I don't think so. And there are several reasons why I don't think so. What I am going to say is I believe that the whole thing, including the arrest, was a conspiracy that happened in advance. And I can't prove FBI complicity, but it is certainly implied."

How many people recognizing or speculating about similar scenarios today are dismissed as purporting paranoid fantasy? Largely because of their likely truth, a brief sample of the current, more popular, conspiracies being exposed, researched, and combated by left conspiracists today includes: the CIA's continued involvement in drug trafficking to fund terrorism; the Bush administration's complicity to, compliance in, or contribution to the tragedy of 9/11; the theft of the 2000 presidential election; the possible theft of the 2004 election with the help of companies manufacturing electronic voting machines; the guarantee that Democrat or Republican will work for the same elite, shadow government as exemplified by the emergence of corporate clone John Kerry, member of the secret Skull and Bones Society, as the democratic front-runner in 2004.

The left's anti-conspiracy scripture

The doctrinaire aversion to conspiracy can be found among the left's most successful spokespersons. Howard Zinn summarizes the stance best: "It's always intriguing to talk about conspiracies. But it's a diversion from real issues. They are attractive because they simplify problems and enable



Stephen Goodfellow

people to focus on a handful of people instead of on complex causes."

Noam Chomsky and Michael Albert in particular promote the official alternative to conspiracy theory; it's called institutional analysis. Chomsky elaborates: "[Conspiracy theory is] just one of the devices that's used in the American indoctrination system to prevent scrutiny of power. If somebody does try to provide a critical analysis of American institutions, one of the ways in which you try to suppress this is to say, well, it's a devil theory or a conspiracy theory or so on. On the contrary, this is just normal institutional analysis. These are institutional structures that exist." Few of us would label Chomsky a fringe critic, but even his highly rational and nuanced investigations can get labeled "conspiracy" by our enemies. Perhaps Chomsky dismisses conspiracy theory because so many on the right have used conspiracy notions to dismiss him?

Since the electoral coup of 2000 and the 9/11 attacks, the proliferation of political conspiracy investigations has intensified. People everywhere agree the Bush regime is worse than we anticipated. Mainstream pundits have invoked comparisons to the Nazis and the Roman empire. However ferocious this neoconservative faction proves to be, politically proper progressives still refuse to entertain the validity of the best documented and most rational conspiracy theories such as the role of neoconservative think tanks in planning the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq even before Bush's coronation. In fact, it is in response to the conspiracy theories emerging after 9/11 that Michael Albert of *Z Magazine* and Z Net published the most thorough and clear denunciation of conspiracy.

His core thesis follows thusly: "Conspiracy theories have manageable implications. They imply that all was well once and that it can be okay again if only the conspirators can be pushed aside. Conspiracy theories therefore explain ills without forcing us to disavow society's underlying institutions. They allow us to admit horrors, and express our indignation and anger without rejecting the basic norms of society. We can even confine our anger to the most blatant perpetrators."

But what happens when we finally admit that conspiracy itself is a necessary norm for the state and capital? Shouldn't we hold despotic perpetrators accountable at the same time we dismantle the institutional underpinnings that prop them up?

Albert continues to assert that conspiracy only focuses on individual aberrations, not systemic flaws: "We need to get rid of the bad apples. All this is convenient and seductive. We can reject specific candidates but not government, specific CEOs but not capitalism, specific writers, editors, and even owners of periodicals, but not all mainstream media. We reject some vile manipulators, but not society's basic institutions. We can therefore continue to appeal to the institutions for recognition, status, or payment."

These rhetorically savvy views function as gospel among leftists; that any self-respecting radical would deviate from the Albert doctrine only confirms the need to continue the doctrine. Albert's total denunciation of conspiracy culture raises several problems, but these have little or nothing to do with "institutional analysis." Institutional critiques of the economic, political, and ideological matrix in which war, racism, sexism, and economic exploitation operate are absolutely essential towards radical awareness.

In fact, radicals often engage in structural critiques alongside conspiracy-related inquiries. But institutional analysis, as an end in itself, eschews the obvious: all institutions are by their nature oppressive and run by individuals; with a vested interest in protecting personal power, these individuals either actively promote or are tacitly complicit in acts of domination, and they have names, addresses, vast assets, and an able network through which to do wrong; these criminals at the top of the social pyramid should not only be held accountable, they should be overthrown. Why

do leftists assume that avid conspiracy theorists would simply remove a despot and leave the despotic system in place?

To assume that conspiracists only see simplicity and refuse to grapple with complexity is only useful when discrediting conspiracy research, theory, and activism wholesale. The institutions of empire and capitalism cooperate with, facilitate, and require conspiracy to expand and survive. Institutional theory and conspiracy theory are not antonyms but different methods among many advocated as radical analyses of

historical trends. Refusing to acknowledge the differences between various conspiracy theories, Albert bludgeons the best of conspiracy-tinted radicalism with the same leftist hammer.

Why not combine institutional and individual analyses with still more avenues of enlightened critique and engaged resistance? Even the best critiques left theorists marshal against conspiracy research usually tarnish the entire genre as bogus. Conspiracy theory without a critique of institutions will falter in a marsh of legalistic detail; institutional analyses without a means for acknowledging and combating individual culpability will remain insightful but ultimately impotent tools in the larger struggle. Finally, theories themselves prefigure but do not create revolutions.

Secret teams and transparent spectacles

Conspiracy theory is not necessarily an ideological gateway drug leading to apathy and alien obsession, especially when it unearths the cold, naked facts of our shared alienation. That some conspiracists do not see the obvious conclusion of their efforts in a revolution for everything is not the fault of conspiracy per se. The leftists correctly argue that we cannot confront the individual bad guys without first questioning and undermining the institutions they serve. However, these institutions will never be undermined, much less abolished, if the entrenched elite continues to control.

For some, conspiracy theory is merely a form fascinating, titillating entertainment like politicized comic books, tarot cards, and Sci-fi novels. Other radicals use conspiracy theory as a tool for awareness and enlightenment, not as an excuse to spend endless hours dedicated to dredging up more details.

In the long view, ending the greatest conspiracy of the State and Capital involves subverting the transparent spectacle as much as overthrowing the secret team. For the relatively privileged, the illusion of freedom must confront the enslavement we find in our own denial and our willingness to remain even partially obedient. At the authoritarian core is not government conspiracy, but the masses' complicity in the psychology of submission. Revolutionary direct action is the only lasting antidote to such crippling compliance, especially when our very methods further the anti-authoritarian vision. If we ever hope to oust the invisible authorities from their secret chambers of sadistic control, we can begin by confronting the visibly authoritarian patterns in our everyday lives.

—Anu Bonobo

Institutional theory and conspiracy theory are not antonyms but different methods among many

America as prison: maximum security on the inside, minimum security on the outside

Dispatch from "Free"

Recently, I was talking politics and revolution with a friend and she said to me the last thing we need is 19-year-old boys fighting a revolution. I think she was referring to me at 19. Sure enough, I don't feel as invincible now as I did then.

Still, that's not the point she was making. Our society is not ready for a revolution. Women still get raped everyday, communities are still divided along racial lines, people still don't care about one another. If revolution came right now and we actually won, ultimately, we would replace what we have now with capitalism, racism and patriarchy because we still haven't overcome those ailments or come up with alternatives.

How's that for a slap of reality upside your head? Ever heard the expression "there's always a few bad apples in every bunch"? What if, in all of humanity, there are only few good apples?

If we can't effectively address the issues of patriarchy and racism, if the streets remain just as violent and unsafe as they are now or worse - is it worth it?

We aren't ready to change my friends, and we have to create it. It is time to pull out all the stops. Everyday we must be educating, challenging, and fighting. We must form alliances. We must smash patriarchy and every form of oppression. We must stamp out racism in every form and we have to do it locally and fast.

To our geniuses out there, and you know who you are, let's get people off the grid. If we could get social centers and infoshops up and running on their own juice, we could set a great example. This spring, plant food in every available space, set up community meetings—bring folks together—forget politics, religion, and color and focus on what everyone has in common and what we can accomplish together.

Revolution is not about politics. It is not about smashing capitalism or anything else. Revolution is the celebration of life and freedom.

Write Free at: Jeffrey Luers, #13797671, OSP, Salem, OR 97310 USA.

Donate to Free's Legal Defense: 1-OnlineDonations-see <http://www.freefreenow.org/appeal.html>
2-Send a check or money order to: Free's Defense Network, PO Box 3, Eugene, OR 97440



The Function of Prison

By Peter Gelderloos

In November, 2001, I was arrested protesting at the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia. I received a six month sentence the next July, eventually seeing the insides of three Georgia county jails, a federal maximum security transit center, and a minimum security federal prison camp. At my politicized political trial, the prosecutor knew I was an anarchist, and it was because of this, and because I openly criticized the judicial system, that I got the maximum sentence despite being a first-time offender.

In modern republics, the function of prison is said to be correction. When individuals break laws that uphold the common good, the conventional wisdom goes, transgressors need to be punished or otherwise taught to be more socially cooperative and generous. In my experience with incarceration, however, the only thing that prison teaches is obedience.

A "corrected" citizen is one who internalizes prison bars even on the streets.

Prison serves as a constant threat against all who would oppose what governments and corporations do with our collective resources. A critic might point out that prison is only a threat to dissidents who break the law, but what it comes down to is that there are no legal means to fundamentally change the government.

If what you want is a society that values human and environmental interests over Machiavellian state and corporate interests, and most people do at some level, then you're out of luck; your government will not represent you. There is no consent of the governed; we were all born subjects, whereas the government is not born out of our initiative or participation. In fact, it functions best without us. If the only option you have is to consent, that's not consensus; it's submission.

On the outside, "super-minimum security," as it should be known, people are trained not to resist, and they are trusted to remain outside of prison so long as they demonstrate they are not a threat to the established order.

Of course, suppression of dissent isn't the only function of prison, and in the U.S. it actually serves only a minor function because so few Americans engage in dissent. They also function to disempower poor and minority communities by locking away what often amounts to a majority of their youth, and generally, for offenses as harmless as drug possession (which in the U.S. has the potential to bring a life sentence).

Prisons also provide cheap, coerced labor; where inmates work for less than a dollar an hour (often not enough to cover the expenses of prison life), making products for government agencies and the military. The Constitutional amendment that outlawed slavery specifically and intentionally opened a loophole that allowed forced labor in the event of incarceration.

In the time it takes "civilized peoples" to relearn how to live and interact at a level higher than that of trained dogs, responding only to immediate reward and punishment, I hope we can all extend a greater degree of solidarity and support to the millions of people whose lives are being incrementally eaten away by the world's prisons.

South Chicago ABC Zine Distro by Anthony Rayson

Prisons are the essence of the state. But as Tom Big Warrior, historian for the traditional Lenape Nation in Pennsylvania puts it in the title of his essay, we must, "Turn the Iron Houses of Oppression into Schools of Liberation."

With the most conscious and articulate voices being muffled inside the jails, it seemed like the anarchist thing to do to get involved where the need was the greatest.

I started writing my own zine, Thought Bombs, and organized a distro of other good, anarchist, anti-racist/abolitionist and feminist zines. More and more, the people with the most to say proved to be courageous, conscious prisoners. I looked for the depth of what they had to say rather than what type of prisoner they were.

Whether they considered themselves, New Afrikans, Muslims, anarchists, or whatever, if they had something of value to say, I'd often do a zine with them. I also applied this perspective to zines written by non-prisoners and by support groups. I'd add them to my distro.

I wrote and edited tons of such zines, mostly by and about prisoners and prisons. I send many publications to prisoners and try to broadcast their struggles. Trying to collaborate with some prisoners is often quite difficult. The screws and goon squads disrupt our correspondence, steal much of the prisoner's work, assault them physically, and move them to their evil supermax dungeons. The authorities can't stand the truth and censorship goes to ludicrous lengths.

The Chicago chapter, part of a growing network of ABC's (Anarchist Black Cross) groups, is organizing our third Prison Abolition Conference. (PAC), August 13-15, at the University of Illinois-Chicago. We're looking for presenters. Email us at: ChicagoABC@hotmail.com, or write Anthony Rayson. South Chicago ABC Zine Distro, Box 721, Homewood, IL 60430.

Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist, Alexander Berkman, Pittsburgh: Frontier Press, 1970 [available from FE Books, see page 44 for information).

For political organizers, the great worth of Berkman's *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist* is the evolution of his political thought during incarceration. He is plunged into the bowels of the beast, stripped of his ultimate sense of worth, yet continuously analyzes his own positions and beliefs.

Berkman finds the "secret of prison survival" is "living for something higher." While recognizing that "he who advances the cause, gives up all," he remains, "not merely a prisoner, but the representative of a movement." Berkman lived out that example in his prison experience.

In a remarkably mature departure, given his own "crime," he reacted negatively to the 1901 assassination of President William McKinley by another anarchist (one associated by the press with Emma Goldman). He disagrees with the "social value" of this "propaganda of the deed" to the workers' movements despite McKinley's clear role as the leading representative of America's newly established imperialism.

And this comes despite Berkman's personal frustration at the pace of change and the injustice and brutalities against workers and their families. This served to increase his feeling of his "revolutionary duty to take the part of the persecuted" and a further commitment to the need to organize in concert with others searching for that "hour of sanity [when] the torch of liberty would flame 'round the world."

In an engaging style, Berkman's journal tells the reader how "day succeeds night in a progression of years . . . death versus time." He shows how a profit oriented society "converted mankind to wolves and sheep. . . a political mastery based on violence." Ultimately, prison is only "an intensified replica of the world beyond." Indeed, true "minimum security" is what lies beyond the serpentine coils of razor wire—and labeled "freedom."

Berkman documents how prison labor was designed to "dull consciousness." As another famous anarchist Peter Kropotkin explained some years earlier in Paris, prison labor is "the work of the slave which degrades" ("Prisons and Their Moral Influence on Prisoners," FE, Winter 1992).

After 15 years, Berkman was released from prison in 1906. He found that he was surprisingly unprepared for the return to outside life.

However, Berkman soon resumed his anarchist activities with Emma Goldman. They were sentenced to prison in 1917 for their activities against the military draft and were eventually deported to Russia in 1919. Both later wrote works documenting their disillusionment with "Bolshevik socialism" and remained committed anarchists throughout their lives.

By: Nick Medvecky, #12155-039
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Jesup GA 31599

Our reviewer has served 14 years in the federal system, formerly did a sentence on a Tennessee rock-quarry chain-gang, time in an army stockade, and brief to not-so-brief incarcerations in Detroit, New York, Idaho, Washington, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, Mexico, Colombia, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Uganda—all more or less politically connected.

We are already in the earliest stages of planning a special issue on prisons for 2005.

Fifth Estate:

The deconstructing race issue of Fifth Estate was a valiant effort. There's plenty to screw up with such an ambitious and easily misunderstood theme/topic, but the issue was, for the most part, well done. I hope it generates the kind of discussion among readers that you wished for. With that said, I must register my discontent with some of the content, particularly Sunfrog's article.

The issue of guilt has figured prominently in the nexus of Third World "revolutionary nationalism," the identity politics of the New Left (more specifically the Maoist varieties), and the attempted solidarity of "white radicals." Sunfrog tries to address this troubling and not-very-useful issue by arguing "white radicals should replace guilt with responsibility and radical consciousness."

Naturally, this is easier to write than accomplish. Nowhere does Sunfrog give readers any ideas on what possible strategies might facilitate such a move from guilt to responsibility, how he manages it, or perhaps even more importantly, what the differences might look like. In other words, how do we move from charity to solidarity, from tolerance to authentic respect? And this is totally separate from the moralism of the "shoulds" with which Sunfrog regales us—this is after all the language of guilt by omission, as opposed to the responsibility of commission.

Furthermore, Sunfrog says "Essentialism can often revert to an ethnic-based neoconservatism.: Not to quibble too much, but when has essentialism not been an ethnic-based conservatism? The essentialist categories of the powerful (racism, classism, sexism) are based on the exact same assumptions of the essentialism of the oppressed, only turned over. The inversion of essentialism remains essentialist. Essentialism manifested politically in the real world is usually called nationalism, and as anarchists we understand that there's no such thing as a "revolutionary nationalism" (as Pedrito correctly points out to M. Staudenmeier).

The issue of essentialism and identity politics would seem to be inseparable, leading to a no-win situation for those with a critique of each or both. Racist-baiting is the first refuge of the scoundrel, yet it is tolerated among anarchists trying to wrestle with the vagaries

LETTERS**TO FIFTH ESTATE****FIFTH ESTATE LETTERS POLICY**

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of racism. Sunfrog's watered-down version of the Race Traitor line remains as unconvincing as their own slogan. It may look and sound like an alternative to white guilt politics, but from where I sit, it looks like more of the same.

In revolt,
C.Boles

Fifth Estate:

This is in response to your back page text of the Winter 2004 FE, "Which One is the Real Tool?," where you compare the internet to television's "empty promise of a global village." Further, you refer to the collapse of the anti-war movement and raise the question, "Could it be that what appears as lethargy and lack of concern, is really digital blowback?"

I don't find the internet to be nearly so alienating as television. As a consumer of mass media, I spent a quarter of a century thinking that activism had died in the early 1970s. When the "Battle in Seattle" registered a quick blip on the radar screen of manufactured culture in 1999, it was due to the internet that I was able

to follow up and make physical contact with those who are now my comrades in struggle. If I spent all my internet time at corporate web sites, then the internet would rival television in its spiritual destructiveness.

Moving to your characterization of the anti-war movement's collapse as a case of digital blowback: If this is truth, it is only in part. Surely, the collapse of the anti-war movement can be traced more directly to the false expectations of its participants, as well as to the myth of positive electoral change.

There was a popular misconception that if we just "put enough people in the streets we can stop this war, like we did in Viet Nam." Serious students of radical history know that the resilience and perseverance of the Viet Cong had more to do with ending American involvement in SE Asia, than any American street demonstrations. The American ruling class has never been especially concerned with what the mass of its subjects want. In the face of this fundamental misreading of history, when half the world turned out last February to oppose the war, but then the invasion went ahead exactly as scheduled, of course there was a huge disappointment, and a sense of "Gee, maybe protest doesn't work after all/anymore."

Now, this is all well and good, because protest alone doesn't accomplish very much, and the sooner we face this unpleasant truth, the sooner more "progressives" will become revolutionary. The problem is that most of the former protesters, rather than moving in a more revolutionary direction, are going the other way and throwing themselves into the "Stop Bush at Any Cost" movement. And the cost of this approach, in terms of creating a counter-culture of defiance and resistance that we both agree is needed, will be high indeed.

You say that digital technology is alienating and sapping the strength of the anti-war movement. I contend that it is reformist politics in general, and electoral politics in particular, that are so utterly alienating and sapping our strength. I must echo Comrade Vaneigem, who said that it is not the tool which alienates the worker, but rather the master's ownership of the tool. The enemy is not a new digital one, but rather

a very old social one, the seductive false promises of social democracy.

I have no easy answers to the dilemma of the modern revolutionary. We have lost the element of surprise when attacking the trade summits. And, we have seen that while carrying signs can serve as an effective communication tool...as can the internet...both fall far short of being revolutionary. Where do serious revolutionaries go from here? That is the question that I have no good answer for, and that I would to see addressed, in lieu of knee-jerk reactions to the growth of technology under capitalism.

Yours in struggle, sitting at a flickering computer terminal somewhere in the wooded hills of North Georgia.

prole cat

www.prolecat.com

P.S. My buddy in Reidsville prison (who is too lazy to write you himself) says everybody passes your mag around the cell block, and loves it.

Walker Lane responds: I'm glad our excellent back page rant has provoked response. It resurrects a debate that goes back almost twenty years in this publication when, in response to Time magazine naming the computer "Machine of the Year" (rather than a person), the Fifth Estate named the sledge hammer as "Tool of the Year" accompanied by a drawing of a monitor being smashed.

The debate continued with a 1990s anti-internet screed by Sunfrog, and now, here we are, chained to our keyboards even in the backwoods of Georgia. If technology was all bad and provided no benefits, no one would use it. Obviously.

In a world where the social has been pulverized and we interact with it as isolated atoms, the internet does seem like a wonderful and powerful tool. Elation about computers and the internet ignores, however, who gains social access to them, permission which is based on class, race and geography, and how they are produced and by whom.

The answers are not a mystery: Adequately waged, First World citizen users, who mostly don't notice the

entirely toxic production process staffed by Third World workers who suffer the health and social consequences, as well as the impact on the natural world (computers are all plastic, eh?).

We all sing the praises of how much the internet links us together, but this thought fails to consider how people used to accomplish communication and community. I spend way too much of my day writing messages and messing with my web site, and wonder how my time was spent prior to this infernal machine entering my life, and worse, my consciousness. There have been great movements of resistance much larger than

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anything currently fielded against the state, and some even before electricity. Gee, how did they do it without the internet?

Prole's most telling remark is his quote that it's "not the tool which alienates the worker, but rather the master's ownership of the tool." Pure Marxist blather. When we workers own the means of production, blah, blah, blah. Capitalist production is based on class domination and wage slavery and can't exist without it. Who is going to go into mines or oil refineries, plastic fabrication plants, or construct chipboards without the coercion of wages? Most answers to this are technocratic fantasies; oh, the machines will do it themselves.

Anyway, I'm glad Prole wrote and hopefully this will reopen an important ongoing discussion.

To the Fifth Estate:

I'm going to pipe up and join the discussion that's been going on between Michael Staudenmaier and Pedrito

Peligro on anarchist approaches to combating fascism (FE #361-#363).

While I agree with Peligro's assessment that "our fight is still against the capitalist state," I remain sympathetic to Staudenmaier's insistence that we need to prepare for confrontations of any kind with extreme right-wing elements who may threaten our comrades. My biggest problem with the arguments made by both writers, though, is that they do not make distinctions between the intensely sectarian views that the groups themselves use in defining their own motivations and objectives.

It's important to remember that the extreme right in North America has been split into innumerable factions, the majority of whom would not define themselves by either set of terms sketched out by Staudenmaier and Peligro.

We've got white-power, anti-Semitic, anti-Federal Government militias

at the same time that flag-waving skin-heads are firebombing mosques in Michigan, and law-and-order Bible-quoting Christian Reconstructionists calling for increased support of Israel. A united front among these groups seems unlikely; in fact, in addition to those existing organizations, we can also expect the current social and political tides in the US to throw up new waves of neo-Confederate ultra-nationalists, clero-fascist anti-abortionists and homophobes, theocratic political parties, and Euro-American "heritage" anti-immigration nativists.

As the factions continue to divide and subdivide, they will require distinctive characteristics to define their program and rely upon these more and more in order to establish viable identities, and we need to pay attention to how they define themselves.

If we are going to counter these poisonous ideas, then we need to be able to assess the sources of their support and their ability to back up their empty-headed threats. In order to do so, we should

be more careful about recognizing the value of the contrasts between and among them.

When we fail to make those distinctions, we risk coming across like those ignorant volunteer cops at the Southern Poverty Law Center who can't understand differences between the New Black Panther Party and Council for Conservative Citizens, or those reporters on Fox News who think that a Food Not Bombs anarchist, an anti-WTO fair trade activist, and a Wahabi Sunni suicide bomber are equivalent synonyms for "terrorist."

Clarence Pearl
Decorah, Iowa

To the Fifth Estate:

Your publication is a continuing inspiration, one of the top periodicals that we are allowed in this plantation gulag. The issues you send me are read by about a dozen political prisoners and revolutionaries as they follow present struggles.

I hope you are able to find space in your budget to continue my free subscription.

Name and prison withheld

FE replies: This paper has historically sent free subscriptions to prisoners of the state—inmates and GIs. Tens of thousands of our issues have gone into prisons and to army bases from Vietnam to Iraq. We continue that program today but realize that we inadvertently deleted the box on our subscription renewal form which allows readers to help offset the cost of sending them by contributing to our prisoner subscription fund.

Please consider making a donation for this purpose when renewing your subscription, or by sending an earmarked donation. Thank you.

Dear FE:

Potlatch is probably one of the aspects of primitive societies that was and is still now most studied, and everybody seems to have something to say about it. That's OK if potlatch is a mere phantasm, a fantasy, a pure abstract concept meaning "gift and counter gift," a concept that has

nothing to do with a real society. But, unfortunately, you seem to be speaking of potlatch as practiced by the NW Indians and I wish to make some brief comments.

How do you think all those goods came to be offered? They had to be produced. Salmon, for instance, didn't just rise out of an abundant sea and didn't

Societies with potlatch were not "free" societies and potlatch is not the way of future "free" societies

preserve themselves all alone! These societies had slaves—a lot of them, between 10% and 20% of the population.

In order to obtain things, there were exchanges of goods (not gifts, but exchanges of mercantile goods). You surely are aware that this society was very non-egalitarian, not at all the model of a "free," "communist" society.

For this aspect of the question, and for the others too, I refer you to the works of an important anthropologist, Alain Testart, who wrote a lot of important stuff (mostly in French, but some in English) on this very subject: *Le potlatch, entre le lustre et l'usure* ("Potlatch Between Display and Usury"), *Journal de la société des Americanistes*, 1999).

You consider potlatch only in an aspect I consider pathological because the aim of potlatch was generally not "to secure great prestige by sensational expenditures too excessive to every be repaid," nor for the purpose of destroying lots of blankets, . . . or even slaves. This is one result of white man's "colonization."

You seem to link potlatch and an absence of war. On the contrary, war, raids and vendettas were common in the societies of NW North America (before white men forbade war and potlatch for moral and mercantile reasons). There were primitive societies that did not know war (only raids), but these did not know potlatch (for example, the Australian aboriginal societies).

You are probably joking when you

write about a "capitalist State's panic over unassimilable economic activity." Capitalism is much stronger than you seem to think. As long as some "unassimilable economic activity" remains localized, no one cares (but some old fashioned Victorian moralists)! Potlatch is actually expanding in Canada (a very capitalist country, as far as I know). As long as people work and consume, no capitalist Kwakiutls are likely to emerge; but happily, there will be Kwakiutl workers and consumers! Capitalism can deal with that.

Potlatch permits us to dream of exchanges in a future "free," "communist," society because it is supposed to have been the mode of exchange in a primitive "free," "communist," society. But the societies that knew potlatch were not "free" societies and potlatch is not the way things will be exchanged in a future "free" society.

Maurice Fhima
France

Hi: I recently found the Fifth Estate on the shelf of a video rental/newsstand in Overland Park, Kansas. The format isn't the same as the ones I used to buy in Detroit back in 1968 and 1969, but the content is just as exhilarating.

Although I'm a pacifist and have moments of believing in God, most of your message suits me just fine. Since an anarchist culture is the only kind that wouldn't ever force violence on me, and would allow me belief in exactly the God that I want to believe in, I believe in anarchy.

Reminiscing: I used to buy the FE when it was a tabloid at the Plum Pit in Royal Oak. I read some of the greatest writing of my life in your paper (and I'm an inveterate reader). There was one article about the funk of blue jeans in a teenager's closet that was related to political freedom—so well done! Also, the Furry Freak Brothers won my heart. For some reason (long sad story), I lost my political bent and even more stupidly stopped reading FE.

Michael Bailey

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news and reviews

Want a 'zine or book reviewed? Want to trade bulk 'zines between your dis-tro and ours? Contact us!

Down at the Barn, we have a few 'zines we can always recommend. Many of these are our sister publications in the Allied Press Syndicate (a radical newswire & publishing coalition). These include the *Asheville Global Report* and *Clamor*. We also trade copies on a regular basis with revolutionary mags like the *Earth First! Journal*, *Slingshot*, *Anarchy*, and *Green Anarchy* (an impressive, intelligent, insurrectionary 'zine that has matured amazingly well since I prematurely dismissed as macho rubbish in late 2002).

While often more leftist than anarchist, publications like the *Northeastern Anarchist*, *Arsenal*, and stuff from the Institute for Anarchist Studies often provide excellent writing, information, and fodder for ideological debate. From the left-of-center "mainstream," every 'zine librarian should look at the likes of *Utne*, *The Nation*, and *Harpers*, with the latter providing its incredible index and the best writing intellectual liberals have provided in decades. For the gender-conscious among us, our friends *RFD* and *Bitch* provide staples. Now, for a book...

An amazing academic contribution to the anthropology of punk rock, Steven Taylor's *False Prophet: Fieldnotes from the Punk Underground* (2003, Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, CT 0659) shows what happens when a genius guitar player from the freakish Fugs and Allen Ginsberg's back-up band (they jammed with The Clash!) joins a Lower East Side anarcho-artcore ensemble. While not as notorious as Dead Kennedys, MDC, or Crass, the Prophets made an important contribution to Reagan-Bush era anarchist music and culture.

Taylor's reflection on the late 80s and early 90s is offered in three distinct ways: first, he shares excellent analytical essays on the politics and meaning of punk; then, he shares raw excerpts from his 1988-1993 journal; finally, he sweetens the package by including a CD of some of the Prophets' best material. All of this makes for a juicy collection. His dispatches from Europe offer insight into the vibrancy of the squatters' culture and his frank discussion of band dynamics are a balance between sobering critique and romantic recollection.

His best insight comes in the essay "Deliberate Amnesia: Punks Origin Myths." Here, he shows how the 1960s made punk possible as a continuation of (not a reaction to) the innovations that included Happenings, the Fugs, St. Marks Church, and the MC5. Even though "many punks situate themselves as anti-hippie," Taylor points out that "punk's antagonistic stance, subject matter, gender-bending, and imperative to self-invention" owes some props to the aging hippies, surrealists, and beatniks who rekindled the Wobbly-esque anarchist culture.

Today, Taylor can be found keeping the spirit of Ginsberg alive at Naropa's notorious Jack Kerouac school, a place where FE contributors are known to turn up disguised as poets and professors. —Ellen Carryout



The editors of *We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anti-Capitalism* (by Notes from Nowhere, Verso 2003, www.versobooks.com) introduce the project as "an activist anthology and a grassroots history, agitational collage and direct action manual. It traces the anti-capitalist movements from their emergence in 1994 to the present, documenting the rise of the unprecedented global rebellion—a rebellion which is in constant flux, which swaps ideas

and tactics across oceans, shares strategies between cultures and contingents, gathers in swarms and dissolves, only to swarm again elsewhere."

Upon first glimpse, the pages are filled with beautiful and inspirational photographs including "riot porn," liberated children, radical cheerleaders, and empowered Zapatista hermanas. Timelines grace the bottom pages throughout the first chapter, charting global events and victories. Inspirational gems crammed into sidelines and bylines make the perfect anarchist bathroom material, framing powerful essays about diverse struggles from guerrilla gardens to the streets of Genoa. This is a scrapbook devoted to the last 10 years of the anti-globalization movement and is an invitation to delve deeper.

Personal journal entries reveal the individual faces behind the mass movement. This book shares intimate feelings behind actions so successful they seem to stem from a hive mind, showing the delicate balance between individuality and collectivism. Real people are sharing real experiences of fear, failure, joy, unity, and ultimately triumph. *We Are Everywhere* lends an antidote to anyone who's ever asked the question "What can I do? I'm just one person" and answers it with a resounding, "I am Marcos!"

A reader gets an inside look into convergence spaces, community gardens, street reclamation projects, and direct action affinity group meetings. It's enough to make any non-activist wonder why they're missing out on all the fun. As someone married to the revolution, I embrace and applaud the beauty and ingenuity of my comrades around the world. It strengthens my connection and personal relationship with people I may never meet.

This book is a response for anyone who may have questioned whether anarchy could really work. Well, the answer becomes glaringly obvious as you read page after page of victory; it's already working in a community near you. "We are everywhere"! —ikkygrl

A collection of essays by Fredy Perlman has been translated into Serbian and published in Belgrade. Anarhija/blok 45 is the imprint of the editorial collective that published this book. The group distributes its publications free—suggesting that interested readers offer a publication in exchange for one of theirs. They have also published Serbian translations of works by Bob Black, Pierre Clastres, Marshall Sahlins, Guy Debord and Jacques Camatte.

Calendar of Resistance

April 5: Trial of Camilo Viveiros scheduled to begin in Philadelphia. Defend Camilo! Defend Dissent!
www.friendsofcamilo.org

April 9-11 - Positive Action's Fourth Annual DIY/T (Do It Yourself/Do It Together) Fest and gathering in Athens, Ohio. If you're interested please email pos_act@yahoo.com for more info.

April 22-26 - Washington, DC - Anti-globalization/Anti-capitalist protests during the IMF/World Bank Spring meetings. www.abolishthebank.org or visit <http://www.50years.org> for details and updates; call 202-IMF-BANK (463-2265) * email: info@50years.org

April 25 - March for Freedom of Choice - Washington, D.C. www.marchforchoice.org 1725 Eye Street, NW, Suite 300 Washington, DC 20006 phone: 202-349-3838 fax: 202-349-3839

RADICAL PRO-CHOICE CALL TO ACTION FOR APRIL 25, 2004: —feminists, radical cheerleaders, anti-authoritarians, anarchists and all those concerned with women's autonomy: join us on April 25th 2004 in Washington, DC for a highly festive mobile cheer bloc! To get involved contact: The Radical Cheerleaders of DC: RCDC@mutualaid.org or Corie at 202-246-1822 or corie@resist.ca or Michael at 202-213-3365 or michael@mutualaid.org

May Day - you know what to do!

May 15-16 - Montreal 5th Annual Anarchist Bookfair and Gathering 2515, rue Delisle (near metro Lionel-Groulx) MONTREAL, QUEBEC. For more info and updates, please see <http://anarchistbookfair.taktic.org/> TO GET IN TOUCH: e-mail: anarchistbookfair@taktic.org telephone: 514-859-9090 post: Montreal Anarchist Bookfair 2033, boulevard St-Laurent Montreal, Quebec H2X 2T3 CANADUH

May 28-31 - 14th Heartwood Forest Council, Middleburg, Virginia (45 minutes west of Washington D.C.) For more info: (812) 337-8898 - info@heartwood.org - www.heartwood.org

May 28-30 Activist Summit & Communities Conference at The Farm in Summertown, TN

<http://thefarmcommunity.com/conference> contact thomas@villagemedia.com or douglas@villagemedia.com

June 4-6 Up Against the Wal-Mart! Protest the shareholders meeting in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Email: againsthewal@gofairtrade.net or visit www.againsthewal.org for more information.

June 8-10 - Sea Island, Georgia - Anti-G8 globalization protests near Savannah, GA. <http://freesavannah.com/g8/>

June 13-21 - Eastern Forest Justice League Third Annual Forest Defense Training camp and skillshare in beautiful Southern Appalachia. contact: 423-949-5922, johnjef@bledsoe.net

June 18-20 - Allied Media Conference. Bowling Green, Ohio. info: amc@clamormagazine.org Become the Media/Clamor Magazine PO Box 20128 Toledo, OH 43610

June 18-27 - Natural Building Workshop at the Sequatchie Valley Institute at Moonshadow, near Chattanooga, TN. For more info please see www.svionline.org or contact SVI/Moonshadow - Route One, Box 304 Whitwell, TN 37397, mediarights@bledsoe.net, 423-949-5922.

June 19-21 - "Occupied Territory: Anarchist/Anti-Authoritarian Gathering 2004" near Fresno, CA. For details, email modanarcho@yahoo.com or freemind@riseup.net

June 30-July 3 - We Are Resisting! Conference - Anti-Imperialist/Anti-Capitalist gathering in Lawrence, KS, followed by a day of action on July 4, in Leavenworth, KS. For more information, please visit the website <http://www.kansasanarchist.net/WAR/>

July 8-11 - 6th Annual Food For Life Workshops and Gathering at the Sequatchie Valley Institute at Moonshadow, near Chattanooga, TN. For more info please see www.svionline.org or contact SVI/Moonshadow - Route One, Box 304 Whitwell, TN 37397, mediarights@bledsoe.net, 423-949-5922.

July 26-29 Democratic National Convention counter protests, Boston, MA. <http://blackteasociety.org/> contact the Bl(A)ck Tea Society at nodnc04@hush.com

August 25-27 - International Food Not Bombs Gathering in NYC.

August 29 - The World Says No to Bush - Worldwide Day of Action and protests in NYC preceding the Republican National Convention.

www.unitedforpeace.org, info@unitedforpeace.org

Aug 29 - Sept 4- Republican National Convention counter protests and decentralized direct actions around NYC, and across the US and the globe. www.rncnotwelcome.org www.counterconvention.org

compiled by john johnson for FE and revolutionaries everywhere (to add an event, please email johnjef@bledsoe.net)



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